

# Falmouth Wind Turbine Options Analysis Process

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Convening Meeting

May 30, 2012



Consensus Building Institute

# Tonight's Meeting Goal

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- Convene the Wind Turbine Option Analysis Process
  - Review Process
  - Clarify and Introduce Representatives
  - Identify Information Needs
  - Brainstorm Operating Protocols
  - Discuss Work Plan and Next Steps

# Draft Ground Rules for Tonight

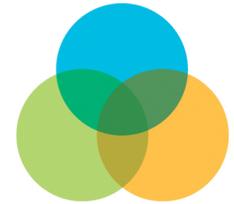
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## PLEASE...

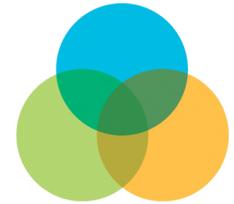
- Share the Floor – Be Concise
- Be Polite – No Personal Attacks
- Speak One at a Time – Use the Mic
- Stay on Topic – No Other Subjects
- Be Interactive – No Speeches

# Overview of Process to Date



- The Town of Falmouth sought to explore the potential for a collaborative process to seek a plan for the future of the town owned turbines and the impacts of those decisions on the town's budget.
- The Consensus Building Institute was retained (hired by the Town, paid by MassCEC) to assist in soliciting perspectives, exploring the potential for and design of a stakeholder process, and possibly facilitating that process.
- CBI conducted confidential interviews, focus groups, and email exchanges with 52 stakeholders to understand their thoughts and concerns about the future of Wind I and Wind II, in order to explore potential for and guide the design of any stakeholder process.

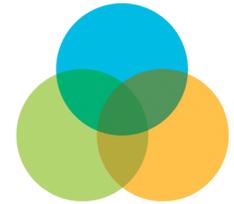
# Process to Date, continued



- Draft findings from assessment released March 14 to interviewees, revised to correct errors and omissions, and released to public on March 23 along with draft process recommendations.
- Public Meeting on April 12 to hear input on the draft process recommendations.
- Revised process recommendations released on April 19.

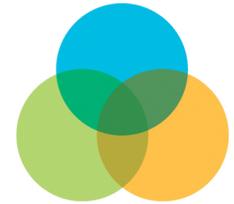
Assessment report goal: to provide an overall, impartial view of the general situation and recommendations on how to best proceed with a process that can engage stakeholders in developing an acceptable future for the Town of Falmouth with regard to Wind I and Wind II.

# Assessment Methodology



- Confidential interviews with 52 individuals including:
  - abutters, elected and appointed officials of the town, town employees, town meeting members, wind turbine supporters, other interested residents, MassCEC, and technical experts in wind turbines and sound mitigation
- Asked about:
  - connection with and views about the turbines;
  - opinions about the accuracy of the analysis, and the desirability of the mitigation alternatives identified in the Weston and Sampson report, and suggestions regarding other options or analysis that should be considered;
  - perceptions of the value of a collaborative process to bring together representatives of a range of views to seek a consensus on resolutions to the current conflict, and
  - their thoughts about how to ensure any such process is fair, inclusive, and effective

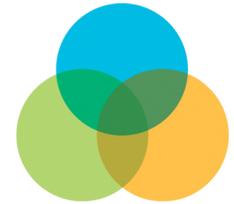
# Key Assessment Findings



- No inclusive history of “how we got here.”
- Different perceptions of “the problem” to be solved
- Insufficient / ineffective communication among stakeholders
- Deep mistrust, frustration, anxiety, skepticism
- Disagreement on viability and desirability of options outlined in W&S Report and additional options suggested by interviewees
- Disagreement or gaps in information about:
  - Measurements of noise levels across sound spectrum (high-frequency, low-frequency, infra-sound), and amplitude modulation, experienced by all abutters in the full range of wind and background noise conditions
  - Health impacts
  - Viability, costs, benefits, and methods for implementation of the most desirable mitigation options

# Process Recommendation

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- The Town of Falmouth Board of Selectmen, with assistance from a neutral facilitator, should convene a collaborative *Falmouth Wind Turbine Option Analysis Process* with representation from all stakeholders and interests.

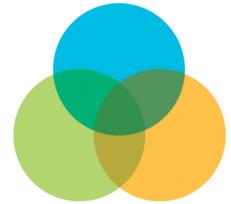
# Core Interests



- Core interests at stake include:
  - Health, safety and well-being of impacted abutters
  - Property rights and economic impacts on property for abutters
  - Town commitment to renewable energy/reducing use of fossil fuel
  - Fiscal impacts on the town

Any broadly acceptable long-term plan for the turbines will need to respond to some extent to all of these core interests.

# Suggested Process Tasks



- *Develop a widely acceptable shared history of events to date*
- Clarify the range of potentially acceptable long-term options
- Identify the questions that would need to be answered about each of those options in order to evaluate their feasibility, costs, benefits, and impacts
- Determine legitimate methods for gaining answers to those questions
- Jointly review and interpret the data that comes back
- Evaluate the options based on the new information

# Additional Goals

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- Improve relationships and effective communication among Town officials, affected families, and other members of the town
- Provide an arena for public information and input and transparent deliberation and evaluation

# Collaboration, not Consensus or Compromise

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- The goal of the group would NOT be to reach agreement on a long-term decision for the wind turbines, but rather to provide the Board of Selectmen with a clear, comprehensive, and inclusive analysis of the range of options, their costs and benefits, and their impacts, based on stakeholder input and interests.
- Participants in the Committee could disagree about the ultimate criteria that the Board of Selectmen should use to make their decision, but still work together to uncover information that can help inform that decision.
- The views of ALL Committee members will be represented in the final analysis. There will be no voting.

# Overcoming the Myth of Science



*“A myth has grown up in the midst of natural resource decision making [that] good science can, by itself, somehow make difficult natural resources decisions for us and relieve us of the necessity to engage in the hard work of democratic deliberations that must finally shoulder the weight of those decisions.”*

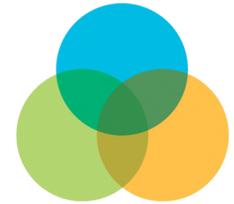
*Mark Rey, Assistant Secretary, USDA*

# Filling Scientific Gaps



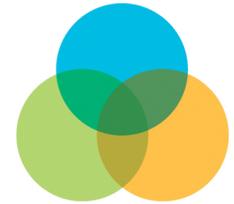
- Data collection should center around information that will be widely perceived as **legitimate** in the eyes of stakeholders, **credible** in technical terms, and (perhaps most importantly) **salient** to the resolution of the issues.
- Answering scientific questions incurs costs, in terms of time and money. There are many things we might wish to know, but we should focus only on research that can inform good decision-making.

# What is Joint Fact Finding?



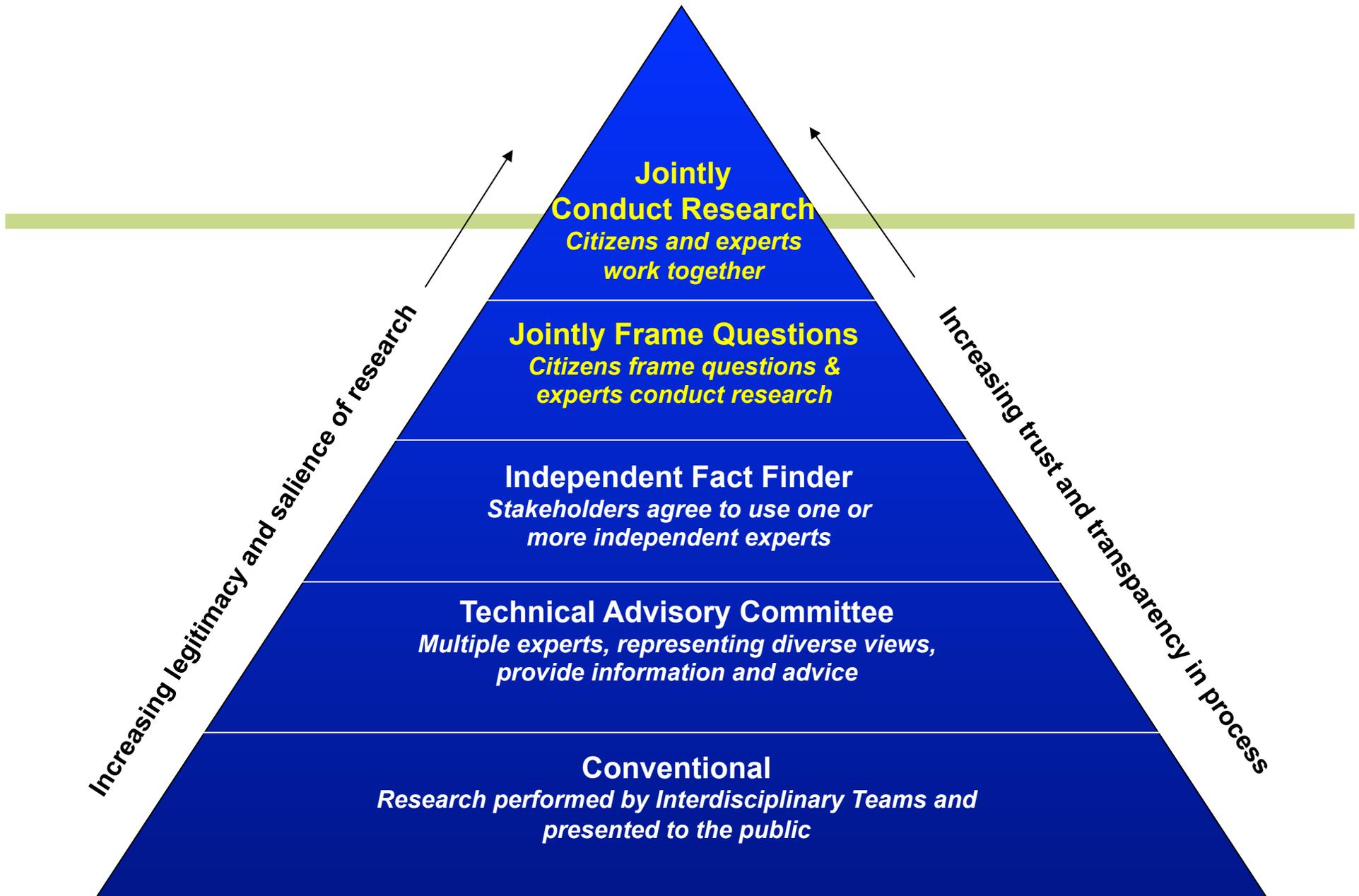
- A collaborative process that allows stakeholders (including decision-makers and experts) to seek agreement on:
  - Nature of the problem
  - What we know, don't know, and need to know
  - How to collect, analyze, and present information
- Produces information that is:
  - Scientifically credible
  - Politically legitimate
  - Relevant (useful or salient)
- An approach to resolve scientific disagreements and maximize public participation

# What JFF Does and Does not Do



- **Does:**
  - Increase understanding
  - Provide more rigorous science
  - Give clarity on limits and uncertainties
  - Develop more believable methods, data & results
  - Increased trust
  - Improve relationships
- **Does not (necessarily):**
  - Provide agreement on conclusions
  - Provide agreement on management actions
  - Create changes to structural conflict
  - Create changes in underlying values

# The Pyramid of Responses



# Four Key Principles of JFF

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1. Jointly frame the research questions
2. Focus on decision-relevant information
3. Clarify the role of science and experts
4. Use contingent agreements

# Principle # 1

## Jointly Frame Research Questions

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- **Problem**

- Even when data exists, people often feel their questions are not being addressed
- People are not always clear about what questions each other care about

- **Solution**

- Gather stakeholders together
- Focus on what you know, what you don't know, and what you would like to know and why
- Jointly frame a set of research questions that meet the interests and concerns of different people

# Principle # 2:

## Focus on Decision-relevant Information

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- **Problem**
  - There are likely to be many questions and lots of uncertainty
  - Not everything people want to know may be needed to make an informed decision
  - How to focus and prioritize?
- **Solution**
  - Focus on what information is needed to make the pending decision – determined by people's interests
  - Build on existing information and focus further data collection and analysis on filling agreed-upon gaps

# Principle # 3:

## Clarify the Role of Science and Experts

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- Maintain the Credibility of Science
  - Develop procedures to gather and analyze information
  - Monitor trends
  - Build and test theory
- Generate Policy-relevant Information
  - Help frame issues
  - Generate options
  - Analyze consequences
  - Communicate findings and conclusions to non-scientists

# Principle # 4:

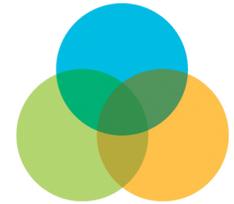
## Use Contingent Agreements

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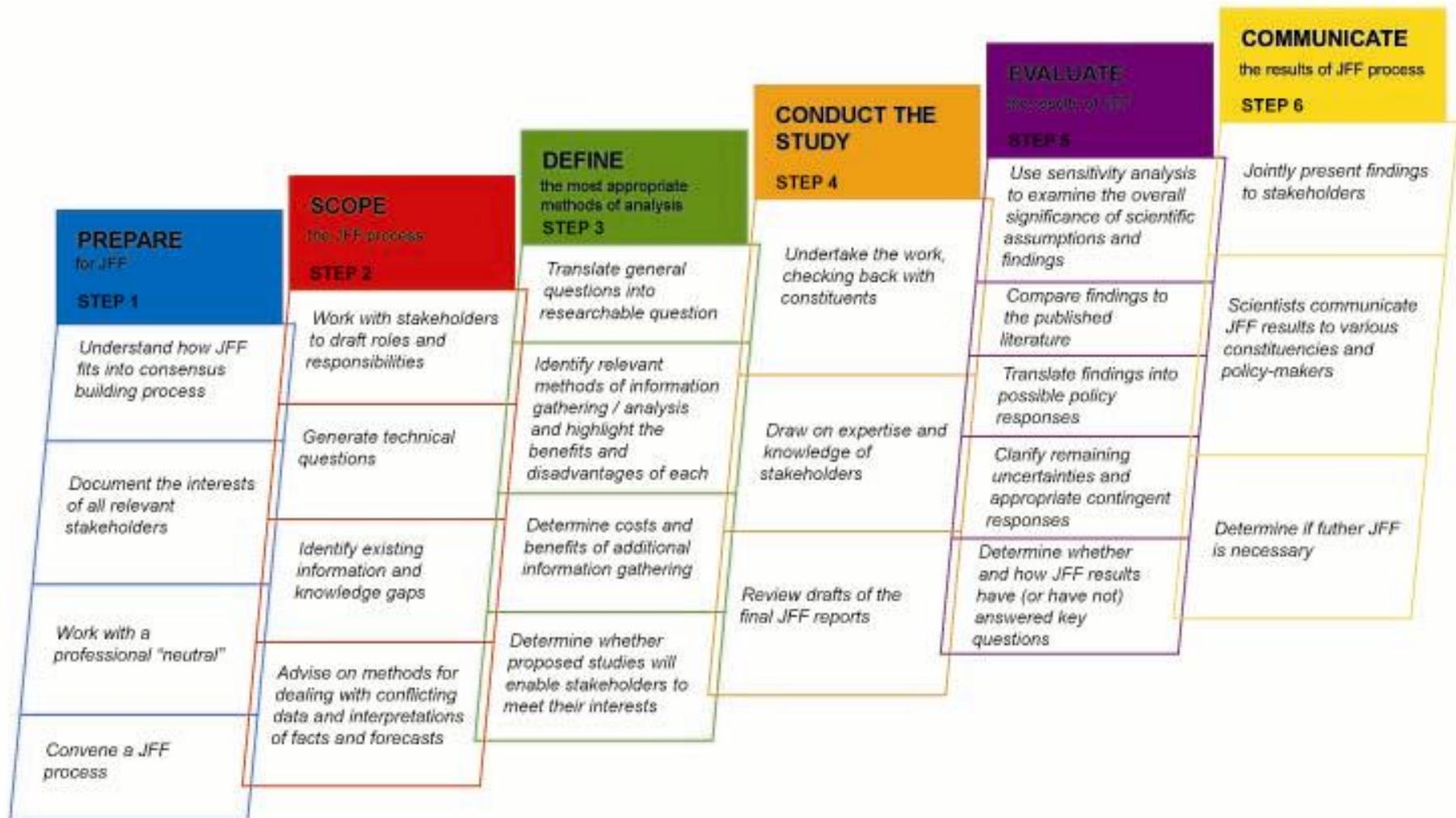
- Acknowledge and accept the inevitability of uncertainty
  - The search for perfect, complete knowledge and understanding is futile
- Agree to move forward based on what you know
  - Create experiments and learn as you go
  - Modify your plan accordingly
  - Be clear about what you don't know and/or where there are disagreements
  - Adopt a learning, adaptive attitude – the theory of adaptive management
- Develop protocols to jointly monitor implementation, document lessons learned, and adapt the plan of action

# Steps in a JFF Process



- Organize means to engage stakeholders
- Identify issues of concern
- Frame questions to be answered
- Explore what is worth doing and why
- Create legitimacy of those doing the scientific/technical work
- Refine the scope of work
- Oversee/review the work at key points
- Analyze findings jointly
- Draw conclusions, limitations, and uncertainties together

# JOINT FACT FINDING: KEY STEPS IN THE PROCESS



# Participants



- 5 residents primarily concerned with adverse impacts on neighbors of the turbines (including health and economic impacts, and residential and commercial abutters)
- 2 residents primarily concerned with implementing Falmouth's climate action protection plan to reduce use of fossil fuel
- 2 taxpayers primarily concerned with maintaining the fiscal benefits provided by the turbines
- 2 residents with strong empathy for all perspectives primarily concerned with a fair and effective process that can lead to amicable outcome that can reunite the town
- 3 relevant Town Departments
- 2 Selectmen as liaisons

# Participant Criteria



- Capacity to represent and articulate the diverse range of interests and concerns of the constituencies they represent, seek input from constituents, and keep them informed about the discussions and proceedings of the Committee
- Willingness and interest in attending all meetings and participating actively in discussions
- Willingness to engage in respectful and constructive dialogue with other stakeholder group representatives, and seek creative resolutions of differences that meet the interests of their own and other groups