

Cost Estimates for NRB Board Governance and Staffing Reforms

As recognized in the Report, the governance structure of the Natural Resources Board should be “professionalized,” to provide appropriate oversight of operations, rule-making authority and policy guidance. Remaining questions include whether it should be a 5-person or 3-person board and whether the professionalized board duties should include hearing appeals or deciding major permit applications.

The salary calculations in the chart below are based on the Public Utility Commission’s part-time commissioners’ salary and benefits plan.

All costs below are not accounted for in current NRB budgets. These changes will require higher General Fund appropriations dependent on the legislative changes made.

New, additional costs associated with legislative requests from Act 182:

Position	NRB
Part-time NRB members	\$158,184 per member (based on PUC part-time commissioner pay & includes benefits)
1-2 additional staff attorneys	\$111,845 per attorney (Staff attorney III pay plan mid-range & includes benefits)
District Commission Chairs paid part-time (40%)	\$48,672 per commission chair (no benefits)
Other misc. costs (travel, mileage, expert witnesses, etc.)	\$30,000
Additional district staff /offices	\$102,000 per district coordinator \$72,388 per district technician (includes benefits); additional district office space averages \$20,000 per office.

- Using the Public Utility Commission as a model, its 2 part-time commissioners in FY24 are paid \$121,680.00 annually. While the salary for these members is calculated for a two-thirds time position (26.4 hours per week), the commissioners’ work varies depending on the project.
- The part-time PUC commissioners also receive benefits, which brings the compensation package to approximately \$158,184 per position.
- It would be appropriate to use the same pay scale for the new part-time Natural Resources

Board members as Act 250 projects require similar professional backgrounds for Act 250 as PUC commissioners bring to their regulatory processes.

- Should a new NRB board be empowered to hear appeals it would require the support of at least one additional attorney to address the increased workload.
- Regardless of whether a NRB hears appeals or major applications, there are other associated costs, related to travel and mileage reimbursements for the NRB to hear cases locally, associated costs with a nominating committee and potentially hiring expert witnesses for appeal cases.

Totals:

5-person NRB:	\$ 807,630
5-person NRB hearing appeals (1 attorney):	\$ 919,475
5-person NRB hearing appeals (2 attorneys):	\$1,031,320
3-person NRB:	\$ 492,262
3-person NRB hearing appeals (1 attorney):	\$ 603,107
3-person NRB hearing appeals (2 attorneys):	\$ 714,952
Dual-appoint/NRB board & 9 PT Commission Chairs:	\$ 438,048
5-person combo (2 professional, 2 Chairs):	\$ 589,606

