

PA Milk Marketing Board
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How to Bring An Issue to The Board

Board hearings begin with a petition. A petition is simply a request that the Board do something that the Milk Marketing Law allows it to do. The Board considers and acts on petitions at its monthly public Sunshine Meetings. Petitions do not have to take any specific “official” form. They’re usually letters to the Board outlining an issue, describing why the Board is authorized to address the issue, and requesting that the Board hold a hearing regarding that issue.

Anybody can petition the Board to hold a hearing – the petition doesn’t have to come from a lawyer. However, it’s important to remember that the party requesting a hearing has to prove at the hearing that the request it made should be granted. Generally, that means proving the Board is authorized to take the action, as well as presenting evidence that the proposed action will benefit Pennsylvania’s dairy industry. Being represented by a lawyer isn’t required, but because the Law has specific requirements regarding how the Board conducts hearings, lawyers are usually involved.

When the Board holds a hearing, anybody may provide relevant testimony and evidence at the hearing. It’s not necessary to be represented by a lawyer when providing testimony at a hearing. All that’s required is to tell the Board that you want to testify, along with a general statement of the topic of your testimony. The Board issues hearing notices and posts them on its website at <https://www.mmb.pa.gov/Public%20Hearings/Pages/default.aspx>. The hearing notice provides information about the hearing – its purpose, where it will be held, and deadlines for parties to tell the Board they want to participate in the hearing and when testimony and evidence must be submitted. The Board also emails hearing notices to those that have requested emailed notices. To get on the email hearing notice list, send an email to deberly@pa.gov.

In addition to providing testimony at hearings, anyone may also provide information to the Board at a Sunshine Meeting. Sunshine Meeting agendas are posted on the Board’s website at <https://www.mmb.pa.gov/Public%20Hearings/Sunshine/Pages/default.aspx>. The agendas are posted one or two days before the Sunshine Meeting. Anyone can look at an agenda and attend the meeting if there’s a topic they’re interested in or would like to provide information about. Each meeting also has a time for public input, which allows attendees to bring concerns or questions to the Board. If you’d like to speak at a Sunshine Meeting, you just have to attend the meeting and sign in on the speaker list.

If you have any questions about petitioning the Board, testifying at a hearing, or speaking at a Sunshine Meeting, please call Doug Eberly at 717-836-3115 or send an email to deberly@pa.gov. For general Board questions and comments, call Carol Hardbarger at 717-210-8244 or by email at chardbarga@pa.gov.