

**Introduction and Orientation:
Background Information for the TURA Program Strengthening Ad Hoc Committee
November 2020**

Introduction

The TURA Administrative Council has convened the TURA Program Strengthening Ad Hoc Committee to review and strengthen the effectiveness and value of TURA program activities to Massachusetts businesses while ensuring ongoing progress to reduce the use of toxics in the Commonwealth and support the adoption of safer materials. This document is intended to provide you with background information on TURA and on the charge of the Ad Hoc Committee.

TURA overview

The Massachusetts Toxics Use Reduction Act (TURA) program works to protect public health and the environment, while supporting the competitiveness of Massachusetts businesses, through a combination of mandatory and voluntary elements. These include reporting and planning requirements, training, grants, and technical assistance.

The core principles of the TURA program are derived from the statutory definition of toxics use reduction and from the policy goals of TURA, as stated in the Preamble to the Act as adopted in 1989. Toxics use reduction is defined as:

“in-plant changes in production processes or raw materials that reduce, avoid, or eliminate the use of toxic or hazardous substances or generation of hazardous byproducts per unit of product, so as to reduce risks to the health of workers, consumers, or the environment, without shifting risks between workers, consumers, or parts of the environment.”

Several key principles are expressed in this definition: focus on use; focus on inherent hazard; protection of workers, consumers, and the environment; and avoiding risk shifting. For more information, see [*Decision-Making under TURA: Resources for the TURA Administrative Council and Advisory Bodies*](#).

TURA implementation

TURA is implemented by three agencies working together: the [Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection \(MassDEP\)](#), the [Massachusetts Office of Technical Assistance \(OTA\)](#), and the [Massachusetts Toxics Use Reduction Institute \(TURI\)](#). The three entities, working together, are often referred to within the program as the “TURA Partners.”

In addition, three bodies play a role in the development and adoption of policy decisions under TURA: the [Science Advisory Board \(SAB\)](#); the [Advisory Committee](#); and the [Administrative Council](#).

Science Advisory Board (SAB). The SAB is composed of scientific experts who provide technical and scientific advice. The SAB is managed by TURI. The SAB advises TURI on the addition or deletion of chemicals from the TURA list and on the hazard categorization of the chemicals found on the TURA list. In addition, TURI may consult with the SAB for scientific or technical advice concerning other TURA-related issues.

Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee is composed of stakeholder representatives from government, the regulated community, workers' organizations, health and environmental organizations, and others. Its role is to provide advice to the Administrative Council and the TURA program, reflecting the perspectives and expertise of a range of stakeholders.

Administrative Council. The Administrative Council is composed of government agency heads or their representatives. The Administrative Council makes TURA program decisions, based on input from the advisory bodies and the implementing agencies. For example, the Administrative Council is responsible for voting on any changes to the TURA List of Toxic or Hazardous Substances, including listings, de-listings, and Higher or Lower Hazard Substance designations. The Council is also mandated to provide input on toxics policy in Massachusetts more broadly.

Ad Hoc Committee Role

The objective of the TURA Program Strengthening Ad Hoc Committee is to review and strengthen the effectiveness and value of TURA program activities to Massachusetts businesses while ensuring ongoing progress in reducing the use of toxics in the Commonwealth and increasing the adoption of safer materials. Discussions that occur within the Ad Hoc Committee will be summarized for the consideration of the TURA Advisory Committee. All members of the TURA Advisory Committee are also encouraged to participate in as many of the Ad Hoc Committee meetings as their schedules permit.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, all TURA Program meetings are being conducted remotely. The TURA Administrative Council Chair, Undersecretary Daniel Sieger, will facilitate the Ad Hoc Committee meetings.

Each meeting will focus on a specific program topic. Topics and potential discussion items are found below.

Background Documents

We ask that you briefly familiarize yourself with some of the following materials before the orientation meeting in order to increase your understanding of the TURA Program's function, goals, and successes. You may wish to review some of these materials in greater depth as the work of the Ad Hoc Committee continues.

- [The Massachusetts Toxics Use Reduction Act \(TURA\) Overview](#) (Highly Recommended)
- [Decision Making Under TURA](#) (Highly Recommended)
- [FY18 TURA Annual Report](#) (Highly Recommended)
- [Toxics Use Reduction and Resource Conservation: Competitiveness Impacts for Massachusetts Businesses](#)
- [Office of Technical Assistance \(OTA\) Business Achievement Case Studies](#)
- [The Massachusetts Toxics Use Reduction Act](#)
- [Toxics Use Reduction Institute \(TURI\) Publications](#)

Draft Ad Hoc Committee Working List of Topics

The first meeting will consist of an orientation to the Ad Hoc Committee's charge and outline the structure, timeline and expectations of this effort. The following topics will be covered over the course of the Ad Hoc Committee meetings but do not necessarily represent the order in which they will be discussed.

DEP Plan Review and Compliance & Enforcement

Discussion topics may include:

- Requests for information – DEP audit of company plans
- Good faith effort
- Quality control for TUR Planners
- Regional inspections / screenings

Resource Conservation / EMS

Discussion topics may include:

- Review of TUR Planner interview responses
- Resource Conservation Planning Guidance Document
- Integrating TUR and RC planning with other business systems and drivers
- Promoting RC planning to TURA filers

TUR Planners & TUR Planning:

Discussion topics may include:

- Review of TUR Planner interview responses
- Creation of tools to help guide planning
- Provide ideas that can be considered when a safer alternative is not available
- Continuing Education
- Certification and Recertification

List of TURA Reportable Substances

Discussion topics may include:

- Maintaining a current and relevant chemical list
- Approaches to updating the list in the coming 1 – 5 years
- Higher Hazard Substances (HHS) and Lower Hazard Substances (LHS)
- Emerging chemicals of concern
- Priority user segments

Fees

Discussion topics may include:

- Annual fee adjustment required by statute
- 2014 fee review and proposal
- Consistency between TURA fee revenue and statutory targets