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THE APWA POLICY AND POSITION STATEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

An important role for APWA is to formulate policies, position statements and resolutions that influence the framework within which public works professionals do their jobs. To reflect the views of its broad and diverse membership, APWA has a member-driven policy process guided by four main principles:

- Support for adequate investment in public infrastructure
- Respect for local authority
- Reasonable regulations and protection from unfounded mandates
- Support for streamlining government oversight

In order to obtain the best results for our membership, it is important to clearly define the APWA policy development process.

DEFINITIONS

Government Affairs Committee: The Government Affairs Committee (GAC), working with the Board of Directors and taking direction from it, defines priorities, creates a vision and sets implementation goals, i.e. precisely what the public policy objectives of the association are and its messages. Based upon these goals, professional staff develops and proposes implementation plans to reach out to external audiences on public policy issues, and the committee refines and approves them. Professional staff provides on-going public policy and public affairs advice. In essence, GAC serves as a steering committee for the public policy advocacy work of APWA's Government Affairs Department, with oversight by the Board.

Policy: A policy is a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of an organization. An APWA policy will provide members overarching guidelines that are significant to public works professionals, the work they do, and the communities, agencies, and organizations they represent. The APWA Board can establish policy for APWA activities only and the policies cannot be directed at any person or group outside of APWA. Policies, once approved, are permanent and should be reviewed annually for content.

Position Statement: A position statement is a point of view offered for consideration and acceptance through the APWA Policy and Position Statement Approval Process. Position Statements should be reviewed annually to determine if they are still appropriate. There are three basic types of position statements.

Advocacy: An advocacy position statement would clearly state APWA support for or opposition to a legislative issue. This statement would be issue specific in nature, and directed to local, state, and national legislators and governmental agency administrators. (TEA 21- Reauthorization)

Regulatory: A regulatory position will state APWA support for action to be taken by an administrative or regulatory body. (Mobility and Access for People with Disabilities [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990])

Guidance: A guidance position statement recommends that public works professionals follow certain practices, methods, and activities. (Outreach to K-12 Students on Careers in Public Works)

Resolution: A resolution is a formal expression of opinion, will or intent voted by an official body or assembled group. APWA resolutions are the official documents of the organization and a method to adopt various policies and position statements. It may supplement a policy but cannot supersede it. Resolutions tend to have a lifespan of one year and can only be adopted by the APWA Board.

POLICY PROCESS

The process usually begins with a draft submittal from a technical committee, local chapter or individual member to APWA staff and may also be initiated by the APWA Board, the House of Delegates, or GAC. APWA government affairs staff is tasked with reviewing and passing advocacy and regulatory statements to the GAC or sending them back to the originator for edits. APWA technical committee staff is tasked with reviewing and passing guidance statements directly to the APWA Board or sending them back to the originator for edits.

Once advocacy and regulatory statements meet APWA staff review, they are sent to GAC. At this stage in the process, GAC can support or reject the proposal. If it is rejected, it is sent back to the originator to be revised. If it is supported by GAC, it is recommended to the APWA Board for approval. The APWA Board has the authority to either accept the proposal or reject it. If the APWA Board rejects the policy or position statement, it is returned to GAC for further consideration or modification. If the APWA Board rejects a guidance statement, it is returned to its sponsor and/or appropriate technical committee for further consideration or modification.

To view a diagram of the process, please see Appendix A: APWA Policy and Position Statement Approval Process Flow Chart.

Appendix A: APWA Policy and Position Statement Approval Process

