

Agricultural Worker Wellness Committee

October 25, 2021

Consensus for Developing Recommendations

Why consensus?

Consensus decisions...

...when done well, develop higher quality solutions/outcomes because they integrate the needs and wisdom/perspectives of all stakeholders.

...are easier to implement because buy-in has already been developed (sometimes decisions are made and then held for years at the legislature or in court, etc).

Why consensus rather than voting?

- AWWC (Committee) is to advise the Governor; Governor is the decision maker
- Knowing what a majority of the Committee thinks might not be that helpful
- More helpful for decision makers to know:
 - Where do interests lie?
 - What options meet the most interests?
 - What are areas of agreement and disagreement?

Definition of consensus

A consensus decision **does not mean that everyone agrees on all the details or that some have changed their ideas or perspectives.** Ideally, a consensus decision reflects mutual understanding, agreement to support a decision, and commitment to take action steps for the benefit of the group.

Consensus operationally

Members should not block or withhold consensus unless they have serious reservations with the approach or solution that is proposed for consensus. If members disagree with the approach or solution selected by the rest of the group, **they should make every effort to offer an alternative that integrates the interests articulated by other members.** Members should remain at the table during deliberations to hear the full discussions in order to make informed judgments when decision making occurs.

Source: Mariah Levison, Director, Office of Collaboration and Dispute Resolution
Minnesota Department of Administration

Questions to consider

- Are interests adequately incorporated into recommendations?
- Do findings and conclusions adequately capture:
 - Differing perspectives?
 - Concerns about how recommendations are implemented?

Suggested Process

- Initial Fist to Five on whole recommendation package
- Starting with lowest scores, identify and capture issues concerns
- Go back through to try to resolve concerns
- Final Fist to Five
- Each member affirms they accept and will support the package of recommendations

Fist to Five

- Fist (=0):** A no vote - a way to block consensus. I need to talk more on the proposal and require changes for it to pass.
- 1 Finger (=1):** I still need to discuss certain issues and suggest changes that should be made.
- 2 Fingers (=2):** I am not in total agreement with the proposal and would like to discuss some minor issues.
- 3 Fingers (=3):** I'm neutral on this proposal but feel comfortable to let this decision or a proposal pass without further discussion.
- 4 Fingers (=4):** I think it's a good idea/decision and will work for it.
- 5 Fingers (=5):** It's a great idea and will work for it.

Adapted from: Ramsey County|
<https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Assistance%20and%20Support/Fist%20to%20Five%20Consensus%20Building.pdf>

Voting Option

Should the Committee fail to reach consensus on certain pressing issues, the facilitator will call for a vote.

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