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To: [ED, State Board of Ed](#)
Subject: [External] Comment on proposed standards
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To whom it may concern:

The Academic Standards for the Environment and Ecology adopted in 2002 marked an important milestone in the curriculum requirements for K-12 public school education. As you know, these standards made explicit the need for students to have the opportunity to learn and master the basic knowledge to equip them for the environmental challenges they will need to contend with as citizens in the 21st century. These challenges are daunting, to say the least; climate change, to cite the most serious but not only challenge, poses an existential threat to life on Earth.

I have several serious concerns about the proposed 2020 Science, Technology, and Environment Standards:

1) The new “integrated approach” eliminates the explicit inclusions of the environment and ecology standards. It is important that these standards stand alone and be spotlighted. We need the current generations of students coming through our public education systems to achieve competency in these standards to be equipped to address the many environmental issues they will face today and tomorrow.

2) Apparently members of the content committee charged to help create the new standards felt that the process was rushed and that more time is required to review and include a large number of the environmental science and ecology standards. The current proposals need to be put on hold and more time be provided for the content committee to provide a thorough review.

3) A number of areas are either weakly connected or not connected at all to the proposed standards. Some specific examples include:

- Watersheds and Wetlands, including their characteristics, role and function, and the impact and importance as an ecosystem, are not adequately addressed.
- Ecosystems and their Interactions are critical for students to fully understand

and comprehend if they are expected to be equipped with a working understanding of the science needed to make informed decisions as individuals and citizens in the communities they live.

- Threatened, Endangered, and Extinct Species in the face of climate change and human impacts require a “deep dive” into management decisions and practices to address the “sixth extinction” period in which our students will live.
- Environmental Laws and Regulations and understanding the responsibilities and role of citizenship in this arena are the ultimate performance standard for our graduates to function in the 21st Century.

4) The proposed standards do not address the NAAEE’s Guidelines for Excellence in Personal and Civic Responsibility, Decision Making and Action Skills, and other areas. Our nation DESPERATELY needs more citizens who take their civic responsibilities seriously.

In conclusion, I feel strongly that the Environment and Ecology Standards should be maintained as a separate, fifth domain and not lost or underserved as a result of their integration with other areas. In addition, I believe the proposed standards should be sent back to the content committee so they receive a full and adequate review.

Thanks very much for your consideration.

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