

Definition of Advocacy

Advocacy is generally defined as the act of speaking or arguing in favour of something. In terms of the APB, advocacy means, and will generally be restricted to:

- Science Directed Advocacy - promoting the science around a particular decision or issue (as opposed to taking a position on a decision or issue), and/or
- Member Directed Advocacy - promoting the use of registered practitioners in the practice of applied biology.

Kinds of Advocacy

1. Science-Directed Advocacy

Purpose: To increase the awareness of the science relevant to a particular issue or set of issues.

Scientific information is a key asset that the APB and members must share with those who make or implement natural resource policy, and with the public at large. When such information demonstrates that a proposed action may harm or benefit a natural resource, APB members have an obligation to respond. Therefore, the APB will undertake advocacy:

- using current, balanced, scientific information as the basis for APB comment on resource issues.
- in a way that will maintain or enhance the Association's reputation as a reliable source of scientific information on natural resources;
- in an ethical and professionally sound manner;

Undertaking advocacy in this way should ensure that the APB's advocacy actions are supported by the Association's membership because they will be technically correct, respectful of alternative views, and consistent with the Code of Ethics.

The following truisms will be used to aid the APB in deciding when the organisation will undertake an advocacy role. Advocacy action will be considered when one or more of the following is in danger of being compromised.

***Statement 1:**

The APB's credibility derives from its reliance on objective, well-researched, peer reviewed, ecologically-sound science and expertise, and on the integrity of its board, staff, policies and, most importantly, members.

***Statement 2:**

Healthy, natural plant and animal populations and habitats are important for their intrinsic value and for the health, enjoyment, and well-being of the public in British Columbia.

***Statement 3:**

An understanding of species and communities and their needs, based on scientific information, is essential for the development of sound public policies

APB Advocacy Policy (continued)

that will encourage the retention/recovery of healthy animal and plant populations and habitats.

*Statement 4:

Public policies in areas such as land use, transportation, economic development, and outdoor recreation should, as far as practicable, be consistent with sound stewardship of all natural resources. Sound stewardship involves preventing or minimizing the adverse effects of human activities on the natural environment, particularly environmental components that are in decline or are unlikely to recover from a particular event if damaged. Stewardship recognizes that humans have a responsibility to maintain an environment that is fit for other creatures to live in, and will continue to be in a good condition for future generations. We have an obligation to practice environmental stewardship because we are able, through our actions, to reduce or destroy the environment's ability to support other plant and animal species and communities.

*Statement 5:

Education programs based on scientific and ethical principles can help provide a sense of place in nature for young people, who in turn can foster enlightened stewardship of natural resources, and this should be encouraged.

2. Member-Directed Advocacy

Purpose – to increase the awareness of the benefits of employing an accountable professional in the practice of applied biology.

One of the roles of the APB is to support members both directly and indirectly by promoting the professional practice of applied biology. Applied biologists who choose to join the APB practice under the aegis of the College of Applied Biology and as such are bound by a Code of Ethics, have had their education and experience reviewed by peers, and are accountable to the College for their professional practice and personal conduct. As Registered Professional Biologists, they are recognized under the *College of Applied Biology Act* as being responsible to uphold and protect the public interest by:

- preserving and protecting the scientific methods and principles that are the foundation of the applied biological sciences
- upholding the principles of stewardship of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems and biological resources, and
- by demonstrating integrity, objectivity and expertise in their area of practice.

Where the provincial legislation requires and/or references practices related to applied biology, the APB will advocate for the service to be undertaken by members of the APB.

APB Advocacy Policy (continued)

Advocacy Criteria

The following criteria shall be used to determine whether the APB is appropriate to engage in advocacy:

- The issue is pertinent to the Association's goals and objectives as stated in the Constitution and Bylaws;
- The importance of the issue warrants the effort of APB Directors, staff and members to address, given that there are many environmental issues of concern to members. Urgency may be a factor if failure to act will place a resource, or the members' ability to undertake their duties, in jeopardy;
- Significant membership support for action is evidenced or known, or there is a legitimate reason why members are unaware of the issue;
- Alternative views on the issue are considered;
- A timely strategy and action plan can be executed, and knowledgeable, responsible people have been identified to complete the action;
- Administrative resources and funds to pursue the action to completion are available or can be secured;
- Consideration has been given to joint action of the Association with other concerned organizations in order to strengthen the position taken, and
- There is a reasonable potential for the Association to make a difference.

Advocacy Activities

Advocacy activities may include:

- sending a letter with a request for action or response;
- drafting and sending a resolution;
- preparing a position paper, legislative briefing paper, or policy paper;
- recommending and/or undertaking an educational forum;
- writing information pieces in newspapers or other publications;
- meeting with key decision makers.

Considerations

The Association must assure that engaging in advocacy will not stain the reputation of the APB or of the College of Applied Biology; similarly, the APB must consider whether not engaging in advocacy could result in the above.

APB Advocacy Policy (continued)

In order to ensure that advocacy will be undertaken in a manner befitting the APB and this policy, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

- Advocacy activities will be science-based;
- Where diverging opinions exist, advocacy activities will provide a complete and balanced presentation of the various positions, using a science based approach;
- In an emergency, when lack of action may result in serious harm to a resource, the Association president and other officers, including the executive director, should forward the best professional opinion or position to appropriate officials; prior consultation with Association, experts should be conducted by whatever means possible; when time permits, membership approval should also be obtained;
- Except for emergency situations, resolutions supporting or advocating a position must undergo a rigorous review by an appropriate number of independent experts knowledgeable on the subject;
- Members and staff representing policies and positions of the Association are expected to present themselves, and their positions in accordance with the highest standards of professionalism, including but not limited to matters of dress, language, demeanour, and sensitivity to the rights and opinions of others.

For any formal position taken, the organizational sponsor – the APB – should be clearly identified so there is no confusion with the College of Applied Biology.