



Amendments Adopted 6/9/10
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Amendments Adopted 11/5/15
Amendments Adopted 8/16/16
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Amendments Adopted 10/3/23

**STATE ONSITE REGULATORS ASSOCIATION (SORA)
BYLAWS**

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ARTICLE 1: NAME, PURPOSE AND DEFINITIONS

1.1 NAME. The name of this organization shall be the State Onsite Regulators Association, abbreviated SORA

1.2 PURPOSE. SORA establishes itself as a non-profit organization that defines its purpose in terms of the following mission and vision:

Mission Statement:

The mission of SORA:

- protect public health and the environment by incorporating quality research, existing information, and state-of-the-art technologies into onsite and decentralized wastewater regulatory programs.
- advance the field of knowledge and practice of those who regulate and interact with onsite wastewater programs.
- serve as an organization that facilitates dialogue between regulators and among regulators and the decentralized industry.

Vision Statement:

SORA's vision is to be recognized as America's experts in the decentralized wastewater industry by promoting viable and sustainable infrastructure for wastewater management to protect public health and water quality.

1.3 DEFINITIONS. The following words, terms and acronyms shall have the following meaning, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

- a. **“Board”** means the Board of Directors of SORA.
- b. **“Captains of Industry (COI)”** means those member companies that offer products and/or services for decentralized and/or onsite wastewater treatment systems.
- c. **“Decentralized Wastewater Treatment System”** means a wastewater treatment system that collects, treats, and disperses/reuses wastewater from individual homes, clusters of homes, isolated communities, industries, or institutional facilities, at or near the point of waste generation. This definition includes Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems.
- d. **“Directly responsible”** means involved in the review of applications for and/or the installations of decentralized or onsite wastewater treatment systems for compliance with applicable regulations and/or having the authority to write and amend regulations that govern the construction and operation of decentralized or onsite wastewater treatment systems.
- e. **“EPA”** means the Environmental Protection Agency.

- f. **“Founding Steering Committee”** means the state decentralized and onsite wastewater treatment system regulators and National Environmental Services Center (NESC) staff that volunteered during the 2008 SORA/COI Conference to be the Founding Steering Committee Members charged with formalizing SORA by creating these bylaws. (See Appendix A.)
- g. **“MOU”** means Memorandum of Understanding.
- h. **“Onsite Wastewater Treatment System”** means a wastewater treatment system relying on natural processes and/or mechanical components that are used to collect, treat, and disperse or reuse wastewater from dwellings or buildings at or near the point of waste generation.

ARTICLE 2: MEMBERSHIP

21 ELIGIBILITY. Those that are in support of the purposes of SORA are eligible for membership according to the classifications listed in Section 2.2 below. All SORA members shall possess a demonstrated capability to provide instruction, leadership and guidance in the field of decentralized and onsite wastewater treatment as set forth by the SORA organization.

22 CLASSES. The general membership of SORA shall consist of three classes: Voting Full Members, Non-Voting Full Members and Non-Voting Affiliate Members.

- a. Voting Full Members. State, tribal and provincial agency personnel that are directly responsible, as defined above, for permitting and/or oversight of decentralized and onsite wastewater treatment systems are eligible as Voting Full Members.
- b. Non-Voting Full Members. County, regional, local health or other governmental agency personnel that are directly responsible for permitting and oversight of decentralized and onsite wastewater treatment systems are eligible as Non-Voting Full Members. This also includes a retired Voting Full Member. If a conflict arises as to the eligibility of a Non-Voting Full Member, the Board shall make the final determination with a simple majority vote.
- c. Non-Voting Affiliate Members. Any business, government agency, educational institution, non-profit or other organization that has an interest in the permitting and oversight of decentralized and onsite wastewater treatment systems, former Full Member, or any retired Non-Voting Full Member or Non-Voting Affiliate Member, is eligible to be a Non-Voting Affiliate Member. Such organizations specifically include, but are not limited to:
- EPA
 - Captains of Industry
 - Indian Health Service
 - Public Utilities or Management Entities

- EPA Decentralized Wastewater MOU Partners
- National Environmental Services Center
- Other groups the Board may deem appropriate

Non-Voting Affiliate Members, excepting retired or former Full Members, may designate one (1) of their employees to be their Delegate to represent the views of their organization at the SORA annual business meeting or conference. However, this is not intended to limit the number of employees that each Non-Voting Affiliate Member may send to SORA meetings.

Applicants wishing to be considered Non-Voting Affiliate Members shall submit an application to the Board for consideration. Non-Voting Affiliate Members shall be admitted by no less than a simple majority vote of the Board.

23 DUES.

- a. Full Members. Each person enrolling as a Voting Full Member or Non-Voting Full Member shall pay the annual dues established in the Dues Policy. Dues must be current to maintain the rights and privileges of membership.
- b. Affiliate Members. Each organization (not person) enrolling as a Non-Voting Affiliate Member shall pay the required enrollment dues established in the Dues Policy. Once a Non-Voting Affiliate Member is enrolled, the Non-Voting Affiliate Member shall pay the annual dues established in the Dues Policy. Dues must be current to maintain the rights and privileges of membership.

ARTICLE 3: RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP

3.1 VOTING FULL MEMBERS. Voting Full Members shall have the following rights and privileges:

- a. speak and be heard;
- b. attend all general and Special Meetings and Conferences;
- c. vote in both general and Special Meetings;
- d. serve on committees as members or chairpersons;
- e. elect members to the Board;
- f. eligible for election to serve on the Board; and
- g. access and use Member List-serv.

32 NON-VOTING FULL MEMBERS. Non-Voting Full Members shall have the rights and privileges:

- a. speak and be heard;
- b. attend all general and Special Meetings and Conferences;
- c. serve on Ad Hoc committees at the request of the Board and vote on matters that are before the committee in meetings; and
- d. access (read only) of the Member List-serv.

Non-Voting Full Members cannot vote in either general or Special Meetings of SORA, cannot serve on the Board, unless appointed per the provisions in section 4.3, and cannot hold a chairpersonship or serve on a Standing committee.

33 NON-VOTING AFFILIATE MEMBERS. Non-Voting Affiliate Members shall have the rights and privileges:

- a. speak and be heard;
- b. attend all Conferences; and
- c. serve on committees at the request of the Board and vote on matters that are before the committee in meetings.

These privileges shall be subject to the following exceptions: Non-Voting Affiliate Members and their delegates cannot vote unless so requested by the Board. Non-Voting Affiliate Members cannot hold a chairpersonship of a committee unless the committee is comprised solely of other Non-Voting Affiliate Members.

ARTICLE 4: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

4.1 COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD. The Board shall be comprised of not less than ten (10) or more than fifteen (15) Voting Full Members with the following composition:

- a. One (1) Voting Full Member from each of the ten (10) EPA regions. These Board Members shall be elected during the annual business meeting by a simple majority of the Voting Full Members present from his/her EPA region.
- b. One (1) Voting Full Member from a Canadian Province. This Board Member shall be elected during the annual business meeting by a simple majority of the Voting Full Members present from Canada.
- c. One (1) Voting Full Member from a Tribal Nation. This Board Member shall be elected during the annual business meeting by a simple majority of the Voting Full Members present who represent Tribal Nations.

- d. Minimum of one (1), maximum of three (3), Voting Full Member (s) at-large. One (1) at large shall be elected during the annual business meeting by a simple majority of all Voting Full Members present. The Board may appoint an additional two (2) at large Board members to act as Secretary or Treasurer, if needed.

When a vacancy cannot be filled utilizing the above-described composition, it may be filled with a Voting Full Member at-large by a simple majority of all Voting Full Members present.

4.2 TERMS OF OFFICE.

All elected Board members shall serve a term of three (3) years. All terms of office shall begin with the adjournment of the Annual Business Meeting following election and shall end with the adjournment of the Annual Business Meeting at which a successor has been duly elected. If at the close of any term of office a successor has not been elected, then the term shall be extended until a successor has been elected.

If a Board member vacates his/her seat before their term is over, the Board may call a Special Meeting to appoint an interim Board member.

4.3 OFFICERS OF SORA. Officers of SORA shall be a President, President-Elect, Past President, Secretary and Treasurer. The Board shall elect a President and President-Elect from current members of the Board by a simple majority of the vote at the conclusion of the Business Meeting. Elections for President and President-Elect shall be held when vacancies occur. Secretary and Treasurer shall be appointed by the Board from the Full Voting membership. Up to one of these positions can be served by any membership class at the board's discretion.

- a. President. The President shall serve a term of one (1) year or the remaining length of his/her term as a Board member, whichever is shorter. The President shall
 - 1) Act as chief administrator of SORA
 - 2) Preside at all Board meetings
 - 3) Be responsible for establishing meeting agendas
 - 4) Carry out policies set by the Board
 - 5) Report to the Board on a regular basis concerning operations of SORA
 - 6) Works with the treasurer to oversee SORA finances and budget requirements
 - 7) Maintaining effective communication
 - 8) Implement the decisions of the Board
 - 9) Have authority to enter into contractual agreements as directed by the Board
- b. President-Elect. The President-Elect shall serve a term of one (1) year as President-Elect and then shall automatically succeed to the Presidency and serve a term of one (1) year as the President. The President-Elect shall perform the duties of the President when the President is unable to act, and shall succeed the

President in the event of the resignation, disability or other permanent termination of the President.

- c. Past President. The immediate Past-President shall act as Parliamentarian for all SORA meetings. The immediate Past-President shall also perform any other duties as may be assigned by the President.
- d. Secretary. The Secretary shall conduct SORA business in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws and shall perform such duties as may be directed by the President or the Board. The Secretary shall:
 - 1) Conduct correspondence on behalf of the SORA and maintain records of such correspondence
 - 2) Maintain records including minutes of meetings, official ballots, records of voting processes and procedures
 - 3) Give proper notice of proposed amendments to these bylaws as set forth in Section 8.5 of these bylaws entitled "Amendments"
 - 4) Maintain a copy of these bylaws
 - 5) Perform other duties that may be included in a published SORA operations manual or similar document
 - 6) Term of office shall be for two years from date of appointment
- e. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall conduct SORA business in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws and shall perform such duties as may be directed by the President or Board. The Board may require the Treasurer to give such security as it may direct for the faithful performance of his or her duties. The Treasurer shall deliver to his or her successor all books, monies, and other property of SORA in his or her possession. The Treasurer shall:
 - 1) Serve as custodian of all SORA funds and property
 - 2) Keep a strict accounting of all receipts and expenditures
 - 3) Provide a Treasurer's report as requested by the President or Board
 - 4) Receive all monies due to SORA from whatever source
 - 5) Pay expenditures as authorized by the Board or the President and are within appropriated budget balances
 - 6) Deposit all SORA funds and securities in suitable checking and /or savings accounts protected by the FDIC or FSLIC
 - 7) Coordinate all of SORA's financial reports required by external sources
 - 8) Prepare and recommend to the Board of directors an annual budget for SORA for each fiscal year
 - 9) Other duties may be included in a published SORA operations manual or similar document
 - 10) Term of office shall be for two years from date of appointment

4.4 ATTENDANCE. Board members are required to attend the SORA Conference and any other meetings that require SORA participation. If a Board member is unable to attend or participate in a Board meeting, the Board member shall notify the President as far in advance as

possible with the name of his/her temporary replacement. Such temporary replacement shall be briefed to the extent possible regarding issues under consideration. The temporary replacement shall be a Full Member and have full voting rights and privileges.

Should a Board member be absent from three (3) consecutive Board meetings or unavailable for conference calls, a majority of the voting members of the Board may interpret such absences as resignation. The President shall inform the absent Board member of the Board's action in writing.

4.5 VOTING. Each Board member shall have the right to cast one (1) vote on matters brought before the Board. Unless indicated otherwise in these bylaws, all Board decisions shall be by a simple majority vote of Board members present at the Board meeting. In the case of a tie vote, the President shall cast the deciding vote.

4.6 RESPONSIBILITIES. The Board shall be the policy-making body of SORA. The Board shall:

- a. provide organization direction and leadership for SORA;
- b. have the authority to designate individual Board members to represent SORA to those outside of SORA;
- c. authorize requests for proposals from members to meet current priorities;
- d. authorize creation of standing committees;
- e. review and approve procedures;
- f. review and approve recommendations of SORA committees;
- g. have the power to conduct the business of SORA except that which is retained by the membership as provided by these bylaws;
- h. be responsible for reviewing the bylaws and submitting amendments to the membership;
- i. be represented on each standing committee, as provided in 7.1;
- j. establish and maintain a SORA operations manual which shall include, at a minimum, a dues policy and funds handling policy;
- k. review and approve a strategic plan submitted by the Strategic Planning Committee every five (5) years or as deemed necessary by the Board;
- l. provide a quarterly report of Board activities to each region consisting, in part, of content solicited from members of the region that each Board member represents;
- m. Appoint *ad hoc* committees; and
- n. Approve an annual budget by December 31 of each year.
- o. The fiscal year of SORA shall begin on January 1 of each year and shall end on December 31 of each year.

The President and various SORA committees derived from SORA's membership shall be utilized as necessary to meet these and other responsibilities.

4.7 RESIGNATION. A Board member may resign by submitting a written notification to the President.

4.8 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST. No Board member shall cast a vote, nor take part in the final deliberation in any matter in which he or she, members of his or her immediate family or any organization to which such director has allegiance, has a personal interest that may be seen as competing or conflicting with the interest of SORA. If a conflict arises, the Board member shall disclose the conflict and recuse them self from the deliberation, consideration and voting on the matter.

ARTICLE 5: COMMITTEES

5.1 STANDING COMMITTEES. There shall be a minimum of three (3) standing committees: the Strategic Planning Committee, Conference/Business Meeting Planning Committee and the Membership Committee. The Board may create other standing committees as deemed necessary by the Board.

5.1.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE. The Strategic Planning Committee shall be responsible for developing recommendations to the Board regarding future directions of SORA; policy recommendations; review and update of bylaws; develop, monitor, and update the SORA Strategic Plan; and other projects assigned by the Board.

5.1.2 CONFERENCE/BUSINESS MEETING PLANNING COMMITTEE. The Planning Committee is responsible for providing recommendations to the Board regarding the Conference and/or Business meeting such as location, logistics, topics, funding sources, and other issues.

5.1.3 MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE. The Membership Committee shall work with the Secretary and Treasurer to set goals for recruitment and retention of members, to maintain a current membership list, to review new membership applications, and to make recommendations to the Board. It is recommended that the committee have at least one non-voting affiliated member that is a retired regulator.

- a. Eligibility. The standing committee members may be elected from among all levels of SORA membership.
- b. Election. The Board shall elect all members of each standing committee by a simple majority vote and designate one (1) Board member(s) to serve on each standing committee.
- c. Term. The term of each standing committee seat shall be two (2) years with re-election possible. Terms shall be staggered to ensure longevity of knowledge within the committee.
- d. Chairperson. Representatives of each standing committee shall elect a Chairperson from among themselves. The Chairperson shall preside over standing committee meetings and be responsible for maintaining communication, coordination and cooperation with the Board. The term of office for each Chairperson shall be two (2) years, or until the standing committee holds a new election. If any Chairperson is unable to finish his/her term, the standing

committee shall elect a new Chairperson who shall serve for the remainder of the term and for an additional one-year term not to exceed a total of two (2) years. Reelection of a standing committee's Chairperson is permitted.

- e. Vice-Chairperson. Each committee shall elect a Vice-Chairperson subject to the same provisions above. The Vice-Chairperson shall chair the committee in the absence of the Chair.
- f. Resignation. Committee members may resign from standing committees by submitting a written notification to the Committee Chairperson. Replacement committee members shall be recommended by the committee and approved by the Board.

52 AD HOC COMMITTEES. Any SORA member may recommend creation of an *ad hoc* committee to the Board. Upon Board approval, the President shall seek volunteers for *ad hoc* committee members as necessary. *Ad hoc* committee members may resign by submitting a written notification to the President. The Board shall appoint a new committee member in the vacancy as necessary. The committee chairperson is responsible for providing reports as directed by the Board.

ARTICLE 6: MEETINGS and CONFERENCES

61 CONFERENCES. SORA may hold a Conference. The Board and the Conference/Business Meeting Planning Committee shall be in charge of making arrangements for Conferences. All business arrangements for any Conference/Business Meeting must be approved by the Board. Agenda items for any Conference/Business Meeting may be recommended to the Board by any SORA member.

The Conference/Business Meeting Planning Committee shall prepare and organize a draft agenda for any Conference and present it to the Board no later than two (2) months prior to the proposed date of the Conference. Adoption of the draft agenda requires a simple majority vote of the Board Members.

62 BUSINESS MEETING. SORA members are to meet at least annually for a Business Meeting at a time and format stipulated by the Board. During the Business Meeting, SORA members shall:

- a. elect members to the Board for any vacant or expired seats;
- b. receive reports from the Board and committees;
- c. recommend the creation of any necessary *ad hoc* committees; and
- d. conduct any other business which shall properly come before SORA.

The President shall be responsible for preparing the draft agenda for the Business Meeting from items submitted by SORA membership, Board Members or *ad hoc* committees or recommended during the Conference. The final agenda must be adopted by a simple majority of the Board Members. The Conference Planning Committee shall provide the agenda, which shall include a time and format for the Business Meeting, a minimum of ten (10) days prior to such meetings.

63 BOARD MEETINGS. The Board is required to meet at least once a month. The President shall establish the time and format for the meeting. They may meet more often when deemed necessary by the President or by a 2/3-majority vote of the Board. The President shall be responsible for preparing the draft agenda for Board meetings which can include items submitted by SORA membership, Board Members or *ad hoc* committees.

Board Meetings shall be open to all members of SORA. However, the Board may move to executive session status and exclude non-Board members from that portion of the meeting.

Non-members of SORA may be invited to Board meetings by the Board for the purpose of giving reports and receiving or transmitting other information, but shall not be entitled to remain in the meeting during the conduct of business unless approved by the Board.

64 SPECIAL MEETINGS. The President of SORA may call such Special Meetings for the purpose of fulfilling contractual obligations entered into by SORA or for any other purpose as deemed necessary by the President or a simple majority of the Board. The President shall prepare and organize agendas for any Special Meetings and present them to the Board to be adopted by a simple majority of the Board. The President shall publish the agenda, which shall state a time and format for the Special Meeting, a minimum of three days prior to such meetings.

65 COMMITTEE MEETINGS. Each standing committee shall have at least one Board member. Committee meetings may be called by the Chairperson of the Committee, the President, or a simple majority of the Board for purposes of executing those duties and responsibilities assigned to the committee. The Chairperson of the Committee shall be responsible for collecting the minutes of the meeting.

Any member of SORA may attend committee meetings.

ARTICLE 7: VOTING

7.1 QUORUM. A quorum shall be required for any vote.

- a. Board Meetings and Special Meetings. For Board Meetings, the attendance of a simple majority of Board Members shall constitute a quorum.
- b. Business Meetings. For a Business Meeting, Voting Full Members in attendance shall constitute a quorum.
- c. Committee Meetings. For Committee Meetings, the attendance of a simple majority of Committee Members shall constitute a quorum.

7.2 ALTERNATIVE VOTING FORUM. In the event that specific items of SORA business require a vote of the Board and/or Voting Full Members and it is impractical to convene a real time meeting, the President may poll members by a format deemed appropriate. The request for a vote shall be issued no later than ten (10) working days before the response deadline. In that event, binding action of SORA shall be taken by a majority of the votes received on or before the response deadline established by the President. Results of any vote shall be confirmed in the Minutes of the next Board meeting of SORA except that the President shall keep confidential how any individual Member voted.

7.3 PASSAGE. Passage of motions properly brought before SORA shall be determined by a simple majority, unless otherwise provided in these bylaws.

ARTICLE 8: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

8.1 SALARIES. No salary may be paid to any SORA member.

8.2 EFFECTIVE DATE. Revisions to these bylaws shall become effective upon majority vote of the SORA Voting Full membership.

8.3 PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY. The rules contained in the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall govern meeting conduct.

8.4 REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES. Any SORA member acting with the approval of the President and with the consent of the Board who incurs expenses on behalf of SORA shall be reimbursed by SORA for such expenses.

8.5 AMENDMENTS. Any Voting Member of SORA may propose an Amendment to these bylaws.

- a. Notice. The proposed amendment(s) shall be distributed at least ten (10) days in advance of the voting.
- b. Passage of Amendments. Bylaws may be amended at any time by a majority of votes cast by Full Voting Members.

8.6 TRANSPARENCY. Each member, in person or by agent or by attorney, has the right to examine the financial records, meeting reports, and ongoing work products, that are required to be kept by SORA, and to make available copies of these documents at cost to the requestor, in accordance with the most current policies and procedures manual, in the manner and to the extent such right shall be given by law.

8.7 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART. See Appendix B. for the organizational chart of SORA.

ARTICLE 9: INDEMNIFICATION

91 INDEMNIFICATION. Unless otherwise prohibited by law, SORA shall indemnify any director or officer or any former director or officer, and may by resolution of the Board indemnify any employee, against any and all expenses and liabilities incurred by him or her in connection with any claim, action, suit, or proceeding to which he or she is made a party by reason of being a director, officer, or employee. However, there shall be no indemnification in relation to matters as to which he or she shall be adjudged to be guilty of a criminal offense or liable to SORA for damages arising out of his or her own gross negligence in the performance of a duty to SORA.

92 INSURANCE. The Board shall authorize the purchase of insurance on behalf of SORA for any director, officer, employee, or other agent against any liability incurred by him which arises out of such person's status as a director, officer, or other agent, whether or not SORA would have the power to indemnify the person against that liability under law.

93 DISSOLUTION. Upon the dissolution of SORA, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose.

APPENDIX A. FOUNDING STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- **Dr. Richard Bajura, P.E., – Director, National Research Center Coal and Energy, West Virginia University**
- **Gerald Briggs, Chief, Bureau of Onsite Sewage Programs, Florida Department of Health**
- **Mista Turner Burgess, Supervising Attorney, Environmental Complaints and Local Services Division, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality**
- **Ed Corriveau, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection**
- **Jennifer Hause – Engineering Scientist, National Environmental Services Center, West Virginia University**
- **Robert Huber, Environmental Programs Manager, Environmental Complaints and Local Services Division, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality**
- **Dr. Gerald R. Iwan, Director, National Environmental Services Center, West Virginia University**
- **Steve Kilbreath, Montana Department of Environmental Quality**
- **Eleanor Krukowski, P.G., Onsite Wastewater Management Program, Bureau of Nonpoint Pollution Control, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection**
- **Russell G. Martin, P.E., Director, Subsurface Wastewater Program, Maine Department of Health and Human Services**
- **Mike Mettler, Director, Environmental Public Health Division, Indiana State Department of Health**
- **Dave Schepens, Program Manager II, Ground Water Discharges Section, Delaware’s Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control**
- **Ahmed Sharaf, Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing**
- **Todd Thompson, California State Water Resources Control Board**
- **Dr. Bob Uebler, Field Services Team Leader for the On-Site Water Protection Section, North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources**

APPENDIX B. SORA ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

