ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE POLICY DESIGN
Some Questions to Consider When Developing and Evaluating Public Policy

I.
DETERMINE POLICY GOAL

OBJECTIVE
- In broad terms, what should the policy accomplish?

OUTCOMES
- How will accomplishment of the objective affect specific people, organizations, aspects of society, elements of the environment, etc.?

MEASURES
- What data should be used to measure accomplishment of the outcomes?

STANDARDS
- What must the data show to indicate that the outcomes have been achieved?

II.
IDENTIFY PROBLEM

DEFINITION
- Specifically, what is the problem?

SIGNIFICANCE
- How significant is the problem from the viewpoint of various stakeholders?

CONNECTEDNESS
- How many other problems are affected by this problem?
- Does resolution of the problem depend upon resolving other problems first?
- Will resolution of other problems eliminate this problem?

TIMING
- How urgent is a resolution?
- What is the range of likely outcomes if nothing is done for one year? Five years? Ten years?
- Is now the best time for those capable of resolving the problem to do so?

PRIORITY
- Relative to other issues important to stakeholders and the Legislature, how important is this problem?

RESOURCES
- Why aren't stakeholders meeting the policy objective with existing resources (private or public

human, financial, or other capital)?
- Could the objective be accomplished by reorganizing resources?
- Is there a lack of specific responsibility, authority, accountability, knowledge, expertise, financial resources, organizational structure, etc.?

III.
DEVELOP SOLUTION

RESOURCES
- Should any stakeholders be given additional authority, money, organizational structure, or other resources to accomplish the policy objective?

RESPONSIBILITY
- Should any stakeholders be made more responsible for accomplishing particular outcomes?

RESTRAINT
- Should any stakeholders be prohibited from engaging in particular actions?

SPHERE
- How much should the private and public sectors each be a part of the solution?

LEVEL
- If the public sector is part of the solution, how should resources, responsibilities, or restraints be allocated among various levels of government?

SCOPE
- Should the solution be narrow and limited in application or should it extend beyond the target population and create costs or benefits to others?

NET VALUE
- What are the full costs and benefits of the solution, including costs and benefits accruing to people and institutions not considered stakeholders? Do these outweigh the costs and benefits of doing nothing?

ADEQUACY
- Is the solution adequate or optimal?

- Does the solution minimize cost? Maximize net value?

LEVERAGING
- Does the solution maximize the use of resources by promoting cooperative, synergistic behavior?

DURABILITY
- How sensitive is the solution to changes in stakeholder or other environmental conditions?

PRECEDENT
- Does the solution create precedents that may be applied in related, or even unrelated, situations?

EMPOWERMENT
- Does the solution enhance the ability and willingness of stakeholders to identify and solve future problems with less outside intervention?

TIMING
- Should the solution be immediate, delayed, phased in, or contingent upon specific events?

LEGITIMACY
- Will the solution be developed in a way that promotes stakeholder acceptance and compliance?

ACCOUNTABILITY
- Who should be accountable for the measurement and accomplishment of various outcomes?
- To whom should reports be made?
- How frequently should reporting occur?
- What are the consequences of failing to achieve specified outcomes?
- How will efficiency be measured?

OVERSIGHT
- Who will provide long-term oversight to determine whether any new policy continues to be relevant and whether it has unintended results?
- What will trigger oversight evaluations?

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