The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) provided that CEQ be comprised of three full-time Senate confirmed Council members, one of whom the President designates as Chair. See 42 U.S.C. 4342. Over the past two decades, Congress has included provisions in enacted appropriations legislation stating that CEQ shall consist of one member, appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, serving as Chair and exercising all powers, functions, and duties of the Council. See, e.g., Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020, Pub. L. 116-94; see also 42 U.S.C. 4342, note (Council on Environmental Quality, Reduction in Members). The Clinton, Bush, Obama, Trump, and Biden Administrations have all nominated one Member that, upon confirmation, has been designated as Chair with all authorities and responsibilities. In addition, the Chair also serves as the Director of the Office of Environmental Quality (OEQ) pursuant to the Environmental Quality Improvement Act (EQIA). EQIA also provides for a presidentially appointed, Senate confirmed Deputy Director of OEQ, however, that position has typically not been filled.

* The Office of the Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO) is housed within CEQ and is staffed by EPA employees. Executive Order 14057 provides that CSO shall be headed by a Federal Chief Sustainability Officer designated by the President.