



State of Louisiana

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

July 1, 2016

To: Jay Dardenne, Commissioner of Administration
Task Force on Structural Changes in Budget and Tax Policy
Louisiana House of Representatives
Louisiana State Senate

From: Karyn Andrews, Undersecretary 
Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

RE: HCR 25 of the 2016 Regular Legislative Session

Below I have outlined the initiatives the department will undertake to ensure a more efficient operation for fiscal year 2017 and beyond, as requested by the Legislature's concurrent resolution:

- Transfer of Human Capital Management from the Division of Administration back to the department. Proposed savings \$47,000. Division of Administration charged DEQ \$570,647 for the HR functions in FY 2016 but the transfer of 6 employees and returning job duties will cost the agency \$522,827 in FY 2017. This is funded by Statutory Dedication – Environmental Trust Fund.
- Consolidate into one agency from a statewide accounting and budgeting perspective, pursuant to ACT No. 17 (HB 1) of the 2016 RLS, which moved DEQ from four agencies with one program in each agency to one agency with four programs. DEQ does not operate as distinct and separate units and but as one cohesive agency. This will allow better efficiencies in budgeting and response to the citizens of the state.
- Contract with Covalent to redesign the DEQ website. This will have an initial cost savings of approximately \$60,000. Use of a contractor will provide more timely upgrades and better response to the agency's needs. Once the website becomes more user-friendly, DEQ anticipates additional use of the website by its regulated industries, which may alleviate high workloads at the department and allow stakeholders to receive information in a more timely manner.
- Use of social media to spread the message of the agency. This is a free communication tool. The information can be shared more expeditiously and is potentially more visible than through the more traditional method of issuing press releases. This will provide the public with the most accurate and timely information on the issues that are important to the public.

- Create a new office within DEQ, pursuant to ACT No. 378 (SB 140) of the 2016 RLS, which created the Office of Environmental Services – a program within DEQ. By June 30, 2017, DEQ will be functionally operating as five distinct programs: Office of the Secretary, Office of Environmental Compliance (OEC), Office of Environmental Services (OES), Office of Environmental Assessment (OEA), and Office of Management and Finance (OMF). This will provide a more balanced staff ratio to Appointing Authority, and ensure each office is able to properly carry out its duties and operate at a maximum efficiency and effectiveness. Currently the majority of functions within the proposed OEA are handled by OEC. OEC has 377 employees with one executive. Because of the potentially competing nature of compliance and assessment, the Office cannot fully focus on the needs of each function to ensure the most efficient processes are utilized to ensure the goals of each function are met.
- Upgrade of DEQ's permitting system from forms-based to a web-based program. With the ability to complete all relevant forms and documentation to issue DEQ's many permit types electronically, the permit process will operate at a higher efficiency, uploading documents to DEQ's Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) will be accomplished with less man-power, as these forms will be electronic already, and records retention will be less cumbersome.
- Issue the DEQ Hurricane Preparation Parish Handbook in an electronic form. This reduced paper, printing time, and provided the materials to the parishes more quickly since the books did not have to be mailed or hand delivered.
- Issue ruggedized tablets to be used in the field to document inspections. Currently DEQ Surveillance and Remediation and Underground Storage Tank staff take inspection notes by hand. These handwritten notes then have to be transcribed and entered in the agency's data system (TEMPO). By using tablets, notes can be taken while at various sites and uploaded immediately. This will allow more inspections per inspector and will improve the accuracy of information entered into TEMPO, as the lag time between observing the site and inputting notes will be minimized. In addition, overall processing time for ins
- Realign regional staff in the north and central regions. Move Pineville office from the Northeast and Northwest Regional Manager to the Acadiana Regional Manager. Provides better supervisor to employee ratio and reduces the travel time of the manager so that he/she can establish more regular face-to-face rapport with employees in all regions he/she oversees. These changes should reduce employee turnover, improve employee training and performance, and ensure employees in field offices are able to perform at the optimum capacity.
- Examine Inspection and Enforcement processes to reduce the lag time between inspectors making referrals to Enforcement and finalization of said enforcement action. With the anticipated decrease in lag time, DEQ believes this will address non-compliance faster and penalties will be issued and collected sooner, and the agency should see an increase in compliance from industry as enforcement will become a more immediate and certain result of non-compliance.