



LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

ACHIEVEMENTS REPORT 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome - Introduction from the Secretary	1
---	---

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality	2
---	---

OVERVIEW of LDEQ OFFICES

Office of the Secretary	4
-------------------------	---

Office of Environmental Services	6
----------------------------------	---

Office of Environmental Compliance	8
------------------------------------	---

Office of Environmental Assessment	10
------------------------------------	----

Office of Management and Finance	13
----------------------------------	----

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Office of the Secretary	15
-------------------------	----

Office of Environmental Services	22
----------------------------------	----

Office of Environmental Compliance	24
------------------------------------	----

Office of Environmental Assessment	25
------------------------------------	----

Office of Management and Finance	27
----------------------------------	----

Conclusion	28
------------	----

INTRODUCTION FROM SECRETARY GIACOMETTO

As we reflect on our accomplishments from the past year, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) stands proud, having achieved significant milestones that underscore our commitment to environmental stewardship while laying a solid foundation for future success. The dedication and expertise of our team have been instrumental in delivering major projects that benefit both our communities and the environment. Looking ahead to 2025, we are filled with optimism and determination, eager to carry this momentum forward.



Our focus remains unwavering: to foster a healthy environment for all Louisianans while enhancing the quality of life for every citizen in our great state. In alignment with Governor Landry's vision that Louisiana is open for business, LDEQ plays a crucial role in driving economic development without compromising our renowned Sportsman's Paradise and its abundant natural resources. As a leader in energy generation for the nation, Louisiana contributes significantly to national security and economic stability.

We are committed to striking a regulatory balance that supports a thriving economy alongside a sustainable environment. With an eye on the future, we are modernizing our operations to adopt evolving technologies, ensuring that LDEQ remains at the forefront of innovation for the next century. By sustainably developing and managing our natural resources, we aim to keep Louisiana strong and growing for generations to come. Our promise to the people of Louisiana is clear: we are dedicated stewards of the environment, here to serve and safeguard the natural beauty that makes our state unique.

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality

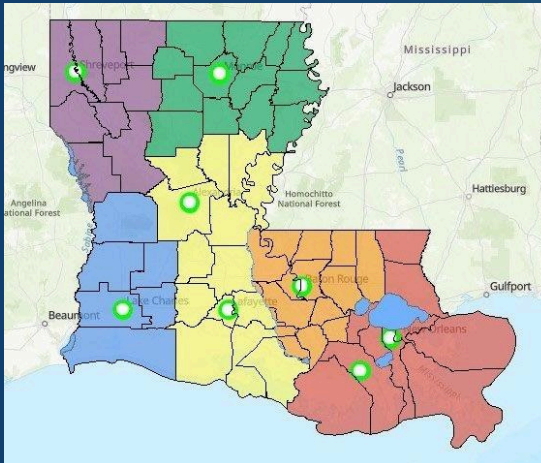
The mission of the Department of Environmental Quality is to provide service to the people of Louisiana through comprehensive environmental protection to promote and protect human health, safety, and welfare. Louisiana is a recognized leader in the protection of the environment, natural resources, human health and the quality of life. A spirit of cooperation and trust exists between state government, local government, businesses, universities, and private citizens in seeking solutions to environmental problems. The healthy, scenic environment, complementary job opportunities, and unique culture of Louisiana all create an unmatched quality of life.



LDEQ is structured to facilitate efficiency, collaboration, and streamlined communication. The office layout comprises several distinct divisions, each designated for specific functions. Within each division, there are various departments managed by department heads who oversee the day-to-day activities and ensure alignment with the agency's objectives. This multi-layered structure ensures effective communication, efficient decision-making, and a clear distribution of tasks, enabling the company to achieve its mission and drive growth.

- 1. Office of the Secretary**
- 2. Office of Environmental Services**
- 3. Office of Environmental Compliance**
- 4. Office of Environmental Assessment**
- 5. Office of Management and Finance**

To serve our constituents and stakeholders, there are six regional offices and two sub-offices.



- New Orleans: Southeast Regional Office (SERO)
- Lockport: Bayou Lafourche Office (BLO)
- Baton Rouge: Capital Regional Office (CRO)
- Lafayette: Acadiana Regional Office (ARO)
- Pineville: Kisatchie Central Office (KCO)
- Lake Charles: Southwest Regional Office (SWO)
- Shreveport: Northwest Regional Office (NWRO)
- Monroe: Northeast Regional Office (NERO)

Establishing clear departmental priorities is essential for the smooth functioning and success of any organization. By defining specific goals and objectives for each department, the organization ensures that all teams are aligned with the overarching mission and vision. These priorities help in channeling efforts towards areas of strategic importance, optimizing resource allocation, and enhancing overall productivity. Additionally, having well-defined departmental priorities enables effective performance measurement and accountability, as each division can track its progress and make adjustments as needed. In January 2024, the Secretary Giacometto announced the five Departmental Priorities:

1. Striking a Regulatory Balance
2. Building Our Future
3. Modernizing for the Next 100 Years
4. Developing and Managing Our Natural Resources for Sustainability
5. Creating Trust By Being Good Stewards

Priority Goals for the Agency:

1. Develop a Progress Dashboard
2. Cut Permitting Times in Half
3. Shape an Informed Public Perception

OVERVIEW of LDEQ OFFICES

OFFICE of the SECRETARY

As the managerial and policy-coordinating office for the Department, the Office of the Secretary works in collaboration with stakeholders, communities, and the regulated businesses to ensure the mission is achieved, which is that clean air and clean water can and do co-exist with growing economies in Louisiana. The Office of the Secretary consists of six offices.

Planning and Performance, Partnership Grants, and Outreach and Engagement:

Planning & Performance activities fulfill requirements to the Division of Administration & Legislature and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency including 5-year Strategic Planning, Operational Planning, Performance Reporting, and project management for the Performance Partnership Grant (PPG) for funding received from the US Environmental Protection Agency. Outreach provides educational outreach and technical compliance assistance to businesses, municipalities/communities, non-governmental organizations, schools, and the public at large. Outreach programs covered under these activities include: LEAP, Enviroschool, Environmental Leadership Program, and other requested outreach activities for the public.

Small Business/Small Community Environmental Assistance Program:

This division Small Business/Small Community Environmental Assistance Program (SB/CEAP) is a non-regulatory program mandated by the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 to provide technical assistance to small businesses to comply with state and federal environmental regulations. LDEQ expanded this program to include assistance to small communities, as well as all environmental media, e.g. water, waste. The program serves small businesses (businesses with less than 100 employees) and communities by explaining their rights and obligations in regards to regulations; identifying pollutants and emission sources for inventory questionnaires; assisting in preparation of environmental permit applications and exemptions; developing pollution prevention plans, and other assistance.

Legal Affairs:

The Legal Affairs Division provides advice, consultation, and representation to all offices of the Department. Attorneys litigate corrective and compensatory actions to repair environmental damage, pursue environmental violators, collect penalties and fees owed to the department, and defend permit and other agency actions in administrative hearings and in both state and federal courts.

Criminal Investigations:

The Criminal Investigations Division (CID) operates in compliance with La. R.S. 30:2025.F (4). Once a determination has been made that a criminal violation of the Louisiana Environmental Quality Act may have occurred, the Department is required to notify the district attorney in whose jurisdiction such possible violation has occurred. The goal for violations is compliance; however, when not possible to achieve the needed activities as deterrence are used. Deterrence includes arrests, serving search warrants, and developing and investigating environmental criminal cases for prosecution. CID compliments LDEQ's civil enforcement efforts by focusing on the most egregious, habitual violators and with CID's collaboration with various state and federal law enforcement agencies the second-to-none environment of Louisiana can be protected.

Audit Services:

Audit Services conducts performance, operational, investigative, and financial audits of the operations of the Department to adhere to state compliance guidelines. Audit Services evaluates and audits private entities who are responsible to self-report to LDEQ, which include the Waste Tire and Underground Storage Tanks programs. Audit Services assesses fees and interest on delinquent accounts, new and used tire dealers and motor fuel distributors.

Communications:

The Communications section handles all media functions including media inquiries, press releases, and LDEQ social media - website, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. These activities provide valuable information to the public on LDEQ environmental activities, which reflect LDEQ achieving its mission of comprehensive environmental protection. The Communication team produces educational and informational materials, such as newsletters, departmental reports, official letters and much more.



OFFICE of ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

The Office of Environmental Services (OES) is dedicated to ensuring that Louisiana's citizens enjoy a clean and healthy environment for both present and future generations. Tasked with establishing and assessing environmental standards in accordance with the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and other relevant environmental laws and case law, OES plays a crucial role in regulating pollution through a comprehensive permitting process. With more than 36,000 permits issued annually, the office serves as the primary division for the LDEQ. By offering a single-entry point for permitting, fostering public participation, and providing technical guidance, OES effectively addresses environmental concerns, all within the framework of applicable regulations.

OES consists of four divisions: Air Permits Division (APD), Waste Permits Division (WSTPD), Water Permits Division (WPD), and the Public Participation and Permit Support Divisions (PPPSD).

Air Permits Division:

APD plays a vital role in protecting Louisiana's air quality by issuing permits and standards designed to safeguard human health and the environment. Through thorough technical evaluations of air permit applications, APD ensures compliance with the Clean Air Act (CAA) and the Louisiana Environmental Quality Act. Delegated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to implement the air-permitting program established under Title V of the CAA, APD is dedicated to maintaining the state's natural resources and fostering sustainable air quality management. APD prepares permits that align with all applicable federal and state air quality regulations, ensuring compliance with health-based national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for criteria pollutants and Louisiana's risk-based ambient air standards for toxic air pollutants (TAPs).

Water Permits Division:

The Water Permits Division (WPD) plays a vital role in safeguarding the state's water quality by issuing permits and standards that protect human health and the environment. Delegated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), WPD implements the Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (LPDES) program, which is essential for regulating discharges of pollutants from point sources into Louisiana's waters.



WPD oversees the issuance of more than 12,000 permits through its two LPDES Water Permitting Sections: Industrial Water Permits and Municipal & General Water Permits. Additionally, the division manages the Biosolids/Sewage Sludge Program and provides Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 401 water quality certifications for CWA Section 404 permits administered by the Army Corps of Engineers, and ensures compliance with Louisiana's Water Quality Regulations (LAC 33: Chapter IX).

Waste Permits Division:

WSTPD is essential in protecting Louisiana's soil and groundwater resources by issuing permits and standards that comply with environmental regulations. WSTPD conducts technical reviews of permit requests from various waste management sectors, including generators, processors, and disposers of solid and hazardous waste, and waste tire processing facilities. WSTPD is responsible for issuing operating and post-closure permits for hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities, as well as overseeing the permitting of municipal and industrial landfills, construction and demolition debris landfills, and waste processing facilities.

The division also addresses geological and engineering aspects related to these permits, ensuring comprehensive oversight of waste management practices.

Public Participation and Permit Support Division:

PPPSD plays a crucial role in enhancing public engagement and supporting media-based permit divisions within LDEQ. PPPSD ensures that citizens and the regulated community are informed about environmental decisions related to permits through public notices and hearings. The division issues multimedia accreditations, notifications, and registrations. Additionally, PPPSD operates the Louisiana Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (LELAP). The division also manages aspects of the Asbestos and Lead-Based Paint Programs, processes hazardous waste notifications and annual reports for the EPA, and certifies solid waste operators, providing critical database support for both internal and external users.



OFFICE of ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

The Office of Environmental Compliance (OEC) plays a pivotal role in safeguarding the public and occupational welfare of Louisiana's citizens and its invaluable environmental resources of cleaner air and water. Tasked with conducting thorough inspections of permitted facilities and swiftly addressing environmental emergencies, this office is dedicated to proactive stewardship rather than punitive measures. Annually, the office carries out an impressive 6,000 inspections and investigates over 2,000 calls, ensuring that compliance is achieved through collaboration and education. By prioritizing a supportive approach to environmental regulations, OEC not only protects Louisiana's natural beauty but also fosters a sustainable future for all its residents. This Office consists of three divisions: Emergency and Radiological Response Division (ERD), Enforcement Division (ED), and Surveillance Division (SD).

Emergency & Radiological Response:

ERD consists of five sections: the Chemical Accident Prevention Program (CAPP), Radiological Emergency Preparedness & Response (REPR), Single Point of Contact (SPOC), Radiation Inspections/Licensing (RIL), and Emergency Response (ER). This division is dedicated to protecting residents from unnecessary radiation exposure through public education, and the regulation of licensees, registrants, and certified people. CAPP develops regulations that prevent accidental release of chemicals into the air, and minimize their consequences, particularly for hazardous chemicals. ER is responsible for responding to environmental and public emergencies on a 24/7 basis, and is equipped to respond to environmental emergencies and conduct monitoring across various media. Additionally, the REPR ensures preparedness for nuclear power plant incidents with on-call personnel for 24-hour response capabilities. REPR trains responders, maintains equipment, and coordinates continuous readiness for radiological emergencies, thus safeguarding the health and safety of Louisiana's communities. Single Point of Contact (SPOC) receives and assigns citizen complaints and/or notifications from Louisiana State Police for the agency.



Enforcement Division:

ED is essential in ensuring compliance with environmental permitting laws and regulations. By implementing appropriate enforcement actions, the division effectively deters future non-compliance and promotes adherence to both federal and state laws aimed at protecting human health and preserving Louisiana's vital environmental resources. The division conducts comprehensive reviews of inspection reports, holds violators accountable, and issues timely enforcement actions designed to secure compliance. Through these efforts, ED ensures the prompt mitigation of any damages resulting from non-compliance, reinforcing its commitment to safeguarding the environment and public health for the benefit of all Louisiana residents.

Surveillance Division:

SD is crucial in protecting human health and the environment through comprehensive inspections of facilities to ensure compliance with permits and regulatory requirements. Responsible for mandated compliance inspections, incident investigations, and water sampling, the division conducts the majority of the Department's fieldwork. This includes routine inspections, specialized evaluations, and follow-up assessments that cover various media, such as water, solid waste, hazardous waste, and air quality.

Incident investigations are initiated based on citizen complaints or notifications of releases, often in collaboration with other agencies. Statewide ambient water monitoring is conducted under the Clean Water Act, gathering essential data that informs standards for uses such as swimming and drinking, thereby supporting the Water Permits Division and other agencies in ensuring comprehensive environmental protection across Louisiana.



OFFICE of ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The Office of Environmental Assessment (OEA) is responsible for protecting and enhancing Louisiana's environmental quality through scientific assessment, regulatory oversight, and data-driven decision-making. OEA's mission is to ensure the sustainability of the state's air, water, soil, and groundwater resources by implementing robust monitoring, evaluation, and remediation strategies. Through its divisions, OEA plays a critical role in mitigating environmental risks, ensuring regulatory compliance, and fostering collaboration with stakeholders at the state and federal levels.

OEA fulfills its mission by overseeing programs that address site remediation, air and water quality assessment, and underground storage tank operations. The Office works closely with industry partners, community stakeholders, and other regulatory agencies to develop policies that promote environmental stewardship while ensuring compliance with state and federal laws. By integrating scientific expertise with regulatory application, OEA supports a cleaner, healthier environment for current and future generations of Louisiana.

OEA consists of four divisions: Remediation Division (RD), Underground Storage Tanks Division (USTD), Air Planning and Assessment Division (APAD) and Water Planning and Assessment Division (WPAD).

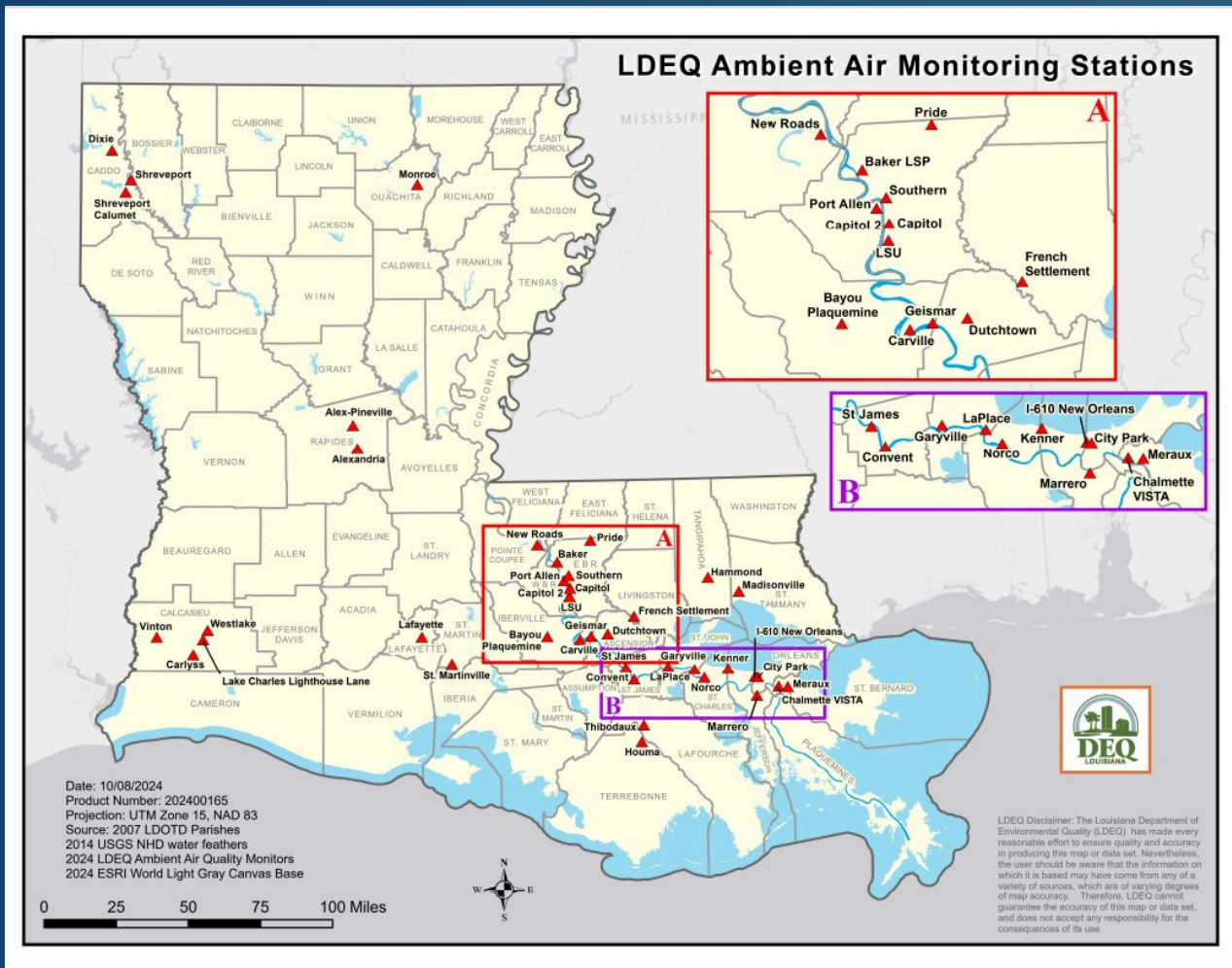
Remediation Division:

RD is tasked with protecting Louisiana's soil, groundwater, and surface water from contamination due to historical and unauthorized releases. It oversees site investigations, corrective actions, and field verifications, ensuring environmental threats are addressed efficiently. The division also manages key programs such as Brownfields Redevelopment, the Voluntary Remediation Program (VRP), Superfund Site Remediation, and Natural Resource Damage Assessments (NRDA). The environmental evaluation and/or remediation of these properties allow contaminated properties to be returned to active commerce while achieving the goal of natural resource preservation.

Underground Storage Tank Division:

UST plays a crucial role in safeguarding public health and the environment in Louisiana by overseeing the management of underground storage tanks (USTs). Currently, there are approximately 10,060 USTs across 3,807 fuel stations in the state. In compliance with the Federal Energy Act of 2005, these tanks are subjected to mandatory inspections at least once every three years. UST is responsible for ensuring that these facilities adhere to regulatory standards, promptly addressing any unauthorized releases of petroleum products.

In the event of a release, the division acts swiftly to detect and remediate contamination, ensuring that clean-up efforts meet the human health Risk Evaluation/Corrective Action Program (RECAP) standards set forth by state regulations. UST meticulously tracks all UST-related activities, including installations, repairs, closures, and removals. Sites with confirmed releases are escalated to the UST remediation staff, who conduct thorough investigations and monitoring to assess the extent of contamination. Ultimately, USTD's comprehensive approach is vital for minimizing environmental risks and protecting the well-being of Louisiana's residents from the potential hazards associated with underground storage tanks.



Air Planning and Assessment Division:

The Air Planning and Assessment Division (APAD) is integral to maintaining air quality in Louisiana, ensuring compliance with the Clean Air Act and the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The division employs rigorous monitoring, data analysis, and regulatory planning to uphold state and federal air quality standards. Central to its mission is the State Implementation Plan (SIP), which outlines control strategies to combat pollution. APAD also compiles comprehensive emissions inventories for criteria and toxic pollutants, reporting these figures to the EPA.

The division maintains an extensive ambient air monitoring network with 40 statewide sites, Additionally, APAD operates two Mobile Air Monitoring Labs (MAMLs), equipped for real-time sampling and analysis and it manages the federally mandated vehicle Inspection and Maintenance program in the Baton Rouge area, targeting compliance with federal ozone standards.

Water Planning and Assessment Division:

The Water Planning and Assessment Division (WPAD) is dedicated to the assessment, restoration, and protection of Louisiana's aquatic resources. It develops and implements water quality standards, oversees watershed protection efforts, and ensures regulatory compliance for surface and groundwater sources. The Water Quality Standards and Assessment Section (WQSAS) maintains vital water quality data and manages the Louisiana Environmental Assessment Utility (LEAU) database, which informs agency decision-making such as water quality standards. The Water Surveys Section collects essential field data, including water quality samples and hydrology data, to support other units within the division. It also assists in evaluating mercury contamination in fish, providing data for public health advisories. The NPS Pollution Prevention Section aims to restore impaired waters and protect groundwater by implementing best management practices.

Additionally, the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and Total Maximum Daily Load Section administers financial assistance for eligible projects to ensure compliance with the Clean Water Act.



OFFICE of MANAGEMENT & FINANCE

The Office of Management & Finance (OMF) plays a crucial role by providing effective and efficient resources to both internal offices and external customers. This support includes ensuring that essential administrative services are readily available, such as human resources, property management, and comprehensive financial oversight, including accounting and billing services associated with the Motor Fuels Trust Fund.

In addition to these traditional administrative roles, OMF is strategically focused on future-oriented programs, such as new streams for energy generation from waste, nuclear, and other sources.

By prioritizing both immediate administrative needs and long-term strategic planning, the OMF streamlines operations but is developing methods to equip the agency to address future challenges in environmental management and sustainability.

The Divisions are Financial Services, Environmental Strategy and Innovation, and Support Services Group.

Financial Services:

Essential financial functions ensure operational efficiency of LDEQ. Key responsibilities include Budget and Expenditure Reporting, Accounts Payable and Receivable, which involve processing invoices, managing travel reimbursements, and depositing payments owed to the LDEQ. The Billing and Invoice Management division prepares and mails over 40,000 invoices to the regulated community while providing necessary customer service.

Lastly, the Motor Fuel Trust Fund Section reviews reimbursement applications from the Motor Fuels Underground Storage Tank Dedicated Fund Account and makes recommendations for payment based on established guidelines. Effectively managing these financial services is critical to facilitate the execution of strategic environmental initiatives.



Environmental Strategy and Innovation:

The Environmental Strategy and Innovation Group is focused on preparing for future opportunities by addressing longstanding environmental hazards, leveraging technology for process efficiencies, and developing innovative energy generation methods to meet increasing demand. It also emphasizes enhancing the workforce through talent recruitment and employee development.

This includes the creation of career advancement programs for current employees and outreach initiatives to engage college and graduate students, such as the Louisiana Environmental Ambassadors Program (LEAP). These efforts aim to build a skilled professional pipeline, cultivating both existing talent and future leaders through comprehensive recruitment programming.

Support Strategy Group :

The Support Services Group 2 Division provides infrastructure of LDEQ's foundational programs, such as Human Resources, general and building services.

The Human Resources Section houses several key functions. HR Classification/Pay staff at LDEQ coordinate new hire appointments and actions, advising agency staff on recruitment, selection, and placement of employees. And they serve as a resource to employees such as retirement, insurance, and other related inquiries.

The financial aspects of the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Program are held within this office while the programmatic portion of CWSRF is operated within WAPD. General and building services provides the internal, behind the scenes service of building and office space for all LDEQ, process and deliver mail, manage vehicles and ancillary assets.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



- Small Business assisted 861 small businesses and small communities, which is defined as 100 employees or less. Provided 5,639 assists such as 466 site visits, 2,433 phone calls, 2,740 letters and emails, and 1,541 general permit assistance.
- Modernized the front office to have a welcoming atmosphere with the addition of a new department sign. Brandishes the LDEQ logo each floor of LDEQ Headquarters
- Participated in three Keep Louisiana Beautiful events hosted by Lt. Governor's Office, such as National Clean-up day.



Hosted six Waste Tire Community Meetings across Louisiana: Gonzales, Carencro, Metairie, Pineville, Shreveport, and West Monroe in collaboration with Governor's Office of Rural Development and Lt. Governor's Office. Elected Officials, municipal workers, business owners, and general public attended. About 4 million new waste tires are generated annually, not including the illegally dumped tires.

- Hosted the First Lady of Louisiana, Sharon Landry, to provide an overview of the agency's mission.



- Conducted the first ever employee townhall in which Governor Landry spoke. This was the first time that any Governor had addressed agency staff.



Secretary Giacometto with Governor Jeff Landry at employee Townhall

- Secretary Aurelia S. Giacometto made over 130 visits across the State, traveling extensively to Louisiana to engage with public, officials, and the regulated industry. Notably, visiting with employees, including 8 regional offices within her first six months. Meetings with Agency Secretaries, State Senators, State Representatives, Parish Presidents, Mayors, and Local Officials during her travels.



Sec. Giacometto and Mayor Briton



Sec. Giacometto and Mayor Hunter



Sec. Giacometto and Senator Lambert and Parish President Dufrense



Sec. Giacometto and Rep. Michael Echols



Sec. Giacometto and Rep. Julie Emerson and Carenco Mayor Charlotte Clavier



Sec. Giacometto and Sec. Susana Schowen

- Worked with DOTD to address a historical chemical release and ensure compliance with environmental procedures on the I-10 Calcasieu River Bridge. This is a significant road infrastructure project for the State of Louisiana that will provide more lanes, full shoulders, and a less steep incline for its future travelers.



- The U.S. Supreme Court cited LDEQ's lawyer in *Ohio v. EPA*, several states and industry groups challenged the EPA's decision to disapprove State Implementation Plans and enforce a "Federal Implementation Plan" for multi-state air pollution.
- LDEQ Communication Team ramped up proactive messaging
- Published 64 press releases and media advisories
- Responded to 67 media requests
- Three Press Conferences
 - Two on L'Alumina, including the Memorandum of Understanding signed with Ascension Parish President.
 - Denka, LaPlace; only manufacture of chloroprene in United States
- Two National Op-Eds authored by Secretary Giacometto
 - Louisiana Is Positioning Itself to Power the Southern Renaissance
 - Bayou Bureaucracy: In Louisiana, We Can Fish and Drill
- Social media
 - 56% increase in Instagram followers
 - 64,781 and 9,399 organic impressions on LinkedIn and Instagram respectively and 246 likes to the 157 posts on X



Formed the Louisiana Military Environmental Alliance (LMEA) to accelerate the remediation and rehabilitation of Louisiana Military installations for military readiness. LMEA hosted its first Summit with U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), including all four branches in attendance marking a significant milestone in Louisiana's environmental and military collaboration efforts. This new partnership aims to advance environmental restoration on Louisiana's military and National Guard properties addressing critical issues of environmental contamination and ecosystem restoration to ensure the lands are viable and available for military readiness and operations.



- Waste Tire Audit Services reduced a 7 year backlog, representing of 374 waste tire fee audits, and within five months through a concerted effort with Financial Services Accounts Receivable 75% reduction achieved, 175 demand letters sent, and seven (7) credit letters totaling \$768,908.36.
- SCR-30 Report: Spearheading Senate Concurrent Resolution 30 on Community Air Monitoring. The Resolution requests that a Task Force be created to study the implementation of real-time community air monitoring and notification systems.
- Ethics prioritized agency-wide by increasing from one Ethics representative to eight ethics representatives by appointing one in each region across the state. The representatives are responsible for the reviews of documents, projects, proposals, and advising employees in ethical matters.
- Developed an agency-wide list of permits/agency activities for a comprehensive catalog of agency approvals, which is 232 different types, including notifications, verifications, certifications, terminations, withdrawals, and more.
- Repository for all agency activities: Overall 1,065 unique activities cataloged for LDEQ. The Department has implemented an agency-wide system to document and catalog the activities of the agency including all forms, letters, background information, briefings, etc.
- New Legal Workgroup created: Permits created a new legal workgroup for the federal rule review to increase awareness of upcoming federal rules that affect the agency.



- **Tiger Teams:** LDEQ implemented new special focus teams to address key environmental legacy issues for the State. The teams consist of multiple specialized staff from across the agency that is knowledgeable of the subject. These teams will each monitor and report on the following issues:
 - **L 'Alumina:** Signed an agreement with Ascension Parish to arrange the clean-up of red dust stacks at the site in Sorrento.
 - **Cottonport Monofil Tire Processor:** worked with Federal and State agencies to remove liens in excess of \$6.0 million that hampered cleanup efforts on the Cottonport Monofil site. Notably, First Guaranty Bank relinquished a mortgage of \$5.2 million of the Monofil. In concert with Avoyelles Parish, LDEQ is developing a strategy to address the whole tires and tire shreds on the site.
 - **Carencro Water Infrastructure:** Worked closely with local officials to help the city reform its plan for a new treatment plant. The revised plans are projected to save taxpayer money and reduce construction time.
 - **Delta Biofuel:** Toured the Delta Biofuels facility in Jeanerette. The facility turns bagasse, a fibrous waste product from sugarcane into a small three-inch pellet. These pellets are then shipped to the UK to be used in boilers for energy generation.
 - **Old Marler Ford:** A commercial building in Colfax was destroyed and subsequently partially demolished following Hurricanes Laura and Delta. The LDEQ Tiger Team and Legal successfully worked through proper procedure and the Court to compel the owner to address the cleanup of the asbestos-laden structure.
- Two programs were established to show appreciation for the hard and diligent work by LDEQ employees: 1) Working Secretarial lunch and 2) Employee of the Month
 - Quarterly Working Secretarial Lunch is voluntary for employees where Secretary discusses LDEQ programs and initiatives and employees can talk about their work and other topics.
 - Established Employee of the Month for employees to nominate their peers for excellence in job performance and customer service. A selection committee chooses the awardee for the month, who holds the award for the month and receives a certificate. These employees are recognized across the agency for their outstanding performance.





Developing a Dashboard for LDEQ

The dashboard represents the leveraging of technology to streamline internal process, provide transparency and up to date information to public and applicants, and provide accountability to LDEQ. The Dashboard will provide regulatory assurance to the industry and communities as LDEQ leverages technology to meet the demands of our growing economy. To develop the LDEQ Dashboard, two teams were established – Regulatory and Technology Team.

- **Regulatory Team:** evaluated all workflow for every permit type, and the other 232 types. These flows are foundational to move to an electronic Dashboard, and an opportunity to evaluate steps that either create or hinder efficiency.
- **Technology Team:** Identified all the data and IT systems used within LDEQ. This team evaluated the function of current systems and identified new applications to perform same activities with greater efficiency. Technology responsible for the application and software for the Dashboard for future projects focus on application software.
- More than 6200 man hours on transforming LDEQ IT and Data infrastructure to develop Dashboard.
- In a technology and data assessment agency-wide, 71 programs/technology, 19 operating systems were identified.
- Held 1st LDEQ Innovation Summit, a two day summit to engage regulated community of LDEQ's work to achieve the Dashboard. Day 1 emphasized the goals of business and industry and Day 2 focused on the users of the Dashboard – permit writers, consultants, EHS managers. A survey prior to and after the Summit gave feedback to assist LDEQ in developing a Dashboard that will be adopted.

- Updated all Social Media handles for consistency in publishing and delivery of LDEQ messages, and increase outreach of LDEQ’s online presence and increase community outreach.
- Reduced inconsistent and redundant domain nomenclature and adopted more similar and user friendly handles for customers.
- Restructure the customer service call center “revamp “to enable direct contact to the appropriate office through an automated system. This resulted in \$40,000.00 savings.



LEAP

Launched in 2024, Louisiana Environmental Alliance Program (LEAP) is LDEQ’s premier extensive summer internship program for college and graduate students to engage in environmental stewardship through exposure to all functional groups of LDEQ, including Surveillance, Permitting, Emergency Response, Enforcement, Remediation, Air Quality and Assessment, Audit Services, Communications, and Legal. In its inaugural year, LEAP hosted 12 students representing seven (7) academic institutions across Louisiana. One of the successes included 30% retention of LEAP interns as LDEQ student workers.



OFFICE of ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Rules and Regulations

The promulgation of these rules served to either streamline regulatory compliance, enhance transparency for the public and regulated community, or provide clarity of application.

- **Coal Combustion Residual Rule:** For states to permit and manage Coal Combustion Residual (CCR) facilities in Louisiana; there are four facilities in LA.
- **Import/Export Rule:** Adopted four (4) rules under Subtitle C of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), focusing on hazardous waste management. RCRA gives EPA authority to control hazardous waste; and hazardous waste refers to characteristics like ignitability, corrosivity, reactivity, or toxicity, and requires special management due to its potential to harm human health or the environment, if not handled properly.
 - Three rules addressed the import and export of hazardous waste, including electronic submission of documents, confidentiality restrictions, and alignment with Canadian regulations.
 - The fourth rule established fees for the hazardous waste e-manifest system submitted to the EPA.
- **Emergency Beetle Rule:** Due to excessive heat in 2023, millions of acres of trees were lost from drought and wildfire, which also resulted in injury to the forestry industry. The devastation was exacerbated by a bark beetle infestation to the remaining drought-stressed pine trees. The divisions of Air and Waste Permits participated in the House Committee of Agriculture, Forestry, and Aquaculture, and Rural Development's Emergency Beetle Subcommittee, which was established to address Gov. Landry's Executive Order JML 24-161. LDEQ promulgated the Beetle Emergency Rule to facilitate the disposal of infested trees and provide relief to the forest industry.
- **Minor Source Air General Permit for Crude Oil and Natural Gas Production (MSOG):** This rule established practicably enforceable limits such that new storage vessels with limited volatile organic carbon (VOC) and methane emissions would not be subject to the control requirements, as given in EPA's new regulations in 40 CFR 60 Subpart OOOOb.

- EPA recognized Louisiana's lead based safety awareness campaign, conducted by LDEQ's Lead-Based Paint Grant Program. The number of lead based paint materials distributed to the public in 2024 was 377. EPA stated, "LDEQ continues to provide exemplary compliance monitoring, public outreach, and accreditation of trainers, training providers, and individuals to the citizens of Louisiana. EPA recognizes the continuing efforts of the LDEQ to remain dedicated to protecting human health and the environment."
- Waste Permits completed the revision to the Comprehensive Plan for Disaster Cleanup and Debris Management.
- Major facilities were facing time constraints with submission deadline with the Discharge Monitoring Report (DMR) submittal for Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (LPDES) Permits. Upon revising internal processes, LDEQ's Water Permits Division extended the monthly submission deadline by ten (10) days for all major LPDES permits, which facilitates greater compliance and collaborative efforts.
- Water Quality Certification (WQC) Process Improvements by:
 - Clarifications on map coordinates
 - Updates to the WQC webpage
 - Coordination with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to streamline revetment and allow electronic submission of signed documents
- Air and Water Permits issued Title V and Discharge for significant projects, in 2024, including Mitsubishi Chemical America, Lake Charles Methanol II, SafeSource Direct, Venture Global, Shintech, Lafayette Municipal Landfill, Heritage -Crystal Clean, Element 25 (LA), Heirloom Carbon, Delta Biofuels, and First Solar Inc.
- Precedential Permitting Decisions by LDEQ issuing first ever permits.
- Extended the construction deadline for the Greenfield Louisiana Terminal, and Formosa petrochemical plant. These extensions require the facilities adhere to current annual PM2.5 national ambient air quality standard (NAAQS).
- In progress for permitting large economic projects: Meta and Shintech.

Permits issued: 1,279

Agency Activities issued/approved: 30,758

OFFICE of ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

The promulgation of these rules served to either streamline regulatory compliance, enhance transparency for the public and regulated community, or provide clarity of application.

- Launched the Self-Audit webpage for the new Self-Audit Program. As a voluntary program that allows regulated companies to avoid fines when they voluntarily disclose certain violations, the program enhances protection through greater compliance. LDEQ engaged the regulated community, associations, environmental groups, and many other stakeholders.
- Enforcement division reduced their backlog by more than 300 cases, representing a 20% reduction. The division re-assessed workflow to prevent a future backlog.
- Accelerated completion of radiation inspection and reports by automating the process flow. This enables prompt engagement and mitigation of damages resulting from non-compliance.
- Surveillance division streamlined their Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) documents by creating accompanying guidance documents to capture and convey the more technical and dynamic information. This approach gives staff the detailed information while diminishing the requirement to update the more formal and voluminous foundational SOP.
- Approval granted for request to increase the pay for radiation inspectors on Mammography Standards Quality Act (MSQA).
- Strategy was implemented to allow local authorities the ability to attain compliance with complaints of unauthorized disposal/burning of solid waste on residential and/or private property. In the event that the city/parish is not successful in attaining compliance, they may request the Department's assistance. The request would include some basic information regarding the site that would be necessary for the Department's investigation efforts.
- Established the LDEQ Disaster Response Team to handle weather-related emergencies that did not rise to the level of GOHSEP. New protocols developed ranging from streamlining temporary permitting activities to increased communication with public and other governmental offices.



OFFICE of ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- Certified the first pollutant reduction credits under LDEQ's Water Quality Trading program (WQT.) WQT is an innovative, market-based, and cost-effective mechanism to improve local water quality improvements by business seeking offsets or mitigation for impacts to water.
- Louisiana Legislature passed ACT 277 of the 2022 regular session authorizing LDEQ to develop a new grant program for Underground Storage Tank (UST) owners to upgrade single wall underground storage tank systems to protect against any future leakage. The grant program was developed with input from the Department and UST stakeholders and initiated in 2024.
- The Louisiana Legislature also passed ACT 167 of the 2024 regular session which increased the maximum per incident reimbursement amount from \$1,500,000 to \$2,000,000 for assessment and remedial activities related to eligible UST releases.



- Seventeen Louisiana projects were awarded a total of \$2,550,000 in funds from the UST grant program. The grant awards UST owners for costs to upgrade from single-walled tanks and/or piping to new double-walled standards, which serves a preventative measure to underground storage tank leaks.
- At Senator Cassidy's Annual Rural Community Funding Workshops, LDEQ educated attendees on technical and financial assistance opportunities for water structure improvements.
- The Nonpoint Source Pollution Program removed the bacteria impairment in Bayou Folse, restoring its primary contact recreation use, after years of impairment.
- Updated source water assessment data for 205 public water sources and developed eight (8) contingency plans, providing critical information for source water protection, emergency response, and environmental investigations.



- Five Louisiana communities and organizations received \$3.2 million in grants to spur revitalization at degraded or abandoned sites in their communities. These funds will be used to address environmental concerns and train the next generation of environmental professionals across the state through Brownsfield Grant Awards.



- The Clean Water Revolving Fund Summit held: Senator Bass participated in Rural Community Funding Summit to provide further technical assistance to the mayors, engineers, and other attendees, and have them engage with other water-related providers for technical assistance or financial assistance. The LDEQ administers the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Program, which provides financial assistance in the form of low interest loans to finance eligible projects, bringing them into compliance with the requirements of the Clean Water Act. Funding for this program is provided by federal grants and match funds generated by the program's interest and loan repayments. The interest and loan repayments will provide a permanent source for funding in future Louisiana projects.

OFFICE of MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

- Human Resources transitioned reallocations, permanent statuses, and position description forms from manual hard copy signatures to electronic signature.
- After 2 years of back and forth, in November 2024, EPA approved LDEQ for the Cross-Media Electronic Reporting Regulation (CROMERR). CROMERR simplifies the reporting process for several critical LDEQ programs by accepting electronic reports:
 - National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP),
 - Clean Air Act Title V,
 - National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES),
 - Underground Storage Tank Standards, and others.
- EPA's approval cleared a major hurdle in LDEQ's efforts to make online permitting applications and other reporting available to the regulated community.
- Initiative cost coding for all LDEQ programs to understand the allocation and expenditures of each program, and in short providing transparency on funds and prioritizing projects.
- Began process to find new office buildings for New Orleans and Shreveport offices to provide better working conditions for employees.
- The Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund closed 19 loans totaling \$127,697,012 for projects ranging from \$500,000 to \$38,948,200 across Louisiana.
- Executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State Treasurer's Office for the Motor Fuels Trust Fund to gain greater return, via interest, on its principal. The interest prior to change was .01% compared to now of 2.24%. Prior to full effect of change, the earnings totaling \$318,558 while projections are excess of \$5 million, representing an increase of over 1,400%.
- Awarded \$20 million to the City of Lake Charles for the Lake Charles Sewer Loop Project, which will help to eliminate wet weather overflow and address capacity issues. The new Loop will also aid in transferring wastewater flows to the current discharge point leading to the Sarver Lift Station.
- Under the Volkswagen Mitigation Trust Settlement Fund, LDEQ distributes money to projects aimed at reducing air pollution by replacing older diesel vehicles with cleaner alternatives with a requirement of public entities such as schools for buses and Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) for \$407,905.93 to replace wildfire suppression equipment that was damaged during the 2023 wildfires.
- Improve Employee on-boarding and education for new staff through presentations for all LDEQ Offices. The presentations were completed as a part of new employee on-boarding program.
- Re-evaluation of fire/evacuation drill for better and safer alternatives for evacuation routes for emergency situations.



CONCLUSION

As we reflect on the accomplishments of 2024, it is clear that the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) has taken significant strides toward ensuring clean air and clean water amidst the rapid growth of our industries. By embracing emerging technologies, LDEQ has strengthened its environmental oversight by finding methods to deliver regulatory assurance and transparency to stakeholders, communities, and the industries that LDEQ regulates. We are working to set a benchmark for sustainable practices that can be emulated across the nation. Our work in 2024 to integrate innovative tools will allow LDEQ to track, manage, and respond to environmental concerns with unprecedented efficiency, safeguarding the health of our communities and ecosystems.

Looking ahead to 2025, LDEQ is poised to build upon this momentum, with its committed employees focused on fostering a more resilient and environmentally conscious future for Louisiana. The dedication to sustainability will remain at the forefront, as LDEQ staff actively engage industries as they proactively adopt cleaner technologies and practices, and adhering to the changing rules and regulations. By prioritizing collaboration and transparency, LDEQ and its employees aim to cultivate a culture of environmental responsibility that resonates with businesses and citizens alike.

As we continue to navigate the growth of Louisiana as Governor Landry leads the Southern Renaissance, his vision for a cleaner, healthier Louisiana is not just aspirational; it is achievable thanks to the tireless efforts of LDEQ employees. With the support of our communities and industries, we can pave the way for a prosperous future where clean air and water are not merely goals but guaranteed rights for all. Together, we will turn this vision into reality, ensuring that Louisiana remains a vibrant and sustainable place to live and work for generations to come.

