

LDEQ Accomplishments

January 9, 2024 to Present

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) under the leadership of Secretary Aurelia S. Giacometto operates with a modernization-driven approach to deliver results across permitting, compliance, community engagement, environmental stewardship, and cost-cutting initiatives.

SECRETARIAL INITIATIVES

Louisiana DOGE

- **Departmental Cost Savings**
 - Savings of **2.7% FY26 Budget** in one (1) year
 - **More than \$5 million** since September 2024
 - Cost-Cutting Activities:
 - Reducing LDEQ footprint (real estate)
 - Moving NOLA office, resulting in more space and less costs
 - Moving Shreveport Office (unsuitable work conditions)
 - Contract cancellations, revisions, and negotiations
 - Phone and internet network changes, conserving \$40,000+
 - Eliminated duplicative services (e.g. medical)
 - **Travel reductions at \$10,000/month** savings, such as Train the Trainer series

- **Addressing LDEQ Backlogs**
 - **Waste Tires Audits:**
 - Resolved **85.83% of 7-year backlog** of waste tire processor audits within 9 months
 - **Remediation:**
 - Reduction of universe **from 728 to 682 active sites**
 - **138 sites** officially closed

- **Conducted Statewide Town Hall Tour**
 - 6 regional Town Halls: Gonzales, Carencro, Pineville, Metairie, West Monroe, Shreveport
 - Generated [Waste Tire Report](#) for Governor
 - Established Waste Tire Grant Program, a pilot for municipalities and parishes to obtain financial reimbursement (funding will be distributed to awardees via reimbursements for expenses paid to address unauthorized tires)

- **SCR 30 Task Force:** [Report](#) generated for Community Air Monitoring and Notification Task Force to study implementation of real-time monitoring and notification systems

- **Legislation for Underground Storage Tanks (UST)**
 - Developed grant program
 - Qualified applicants can receive funding to assist in transitioning to safer, more reliable tank systems
 - 17 sites were approved for a maximum amount of \$2,550,000 in 2024
 - Increased maximum per incident reimbursement from \$1,500,000 to \$2,000,000 for assessment and remedial activities

LDEQ OPERATIONS

- **Established Louisiana Environmental Ambassadors Program (LEAP) in 2024**
 - LDEQ talent pipeline for future employees
 - Comprehensive 8-10 week paid summer internship for undergraduate and graduate students with weekly speaker series, facility tours, projects within all divisions of LDEQ Inaugural Year (2024)
 - Twelve interns from 7 LA academic institutions
 - **30% retention of LEAP intern to LDEQ student workers**
 - In 2025, hired 1st LEAP intern as LDEQ employee
 - LEAP costs less than \$55,000 annually

- **Support**
 - **Created Louisiana Environmental Military Alliance (LMEA) (August 2024)**
 - LDEQ supporting military readiness and operations on all LA military installations by accelerating the remediation and restoration of contaminated sites
 - LDEQ hosted 1st Annual LMEA Summit with the U.S. Department of Defense, Louisiana National Guard
 - **20% of contaminated sites** at Barksdale Air Force Base cleaned within 6 months

- **Established Tiger Team Model**
 - Deployed targeted interagency strike teams to address legacy environmental hazards that have eluded prior administrations:
 - **Cottonport Monofil:**
 - Waste tire site with 200,000 tires; a fire in 2022 endangered the lives of almost 2,000 people less than ¼ mile away
 - Worked with Federal and State agencies to **remove liens in excess of \$6.0 million** that hampered cleanup efforts on Cottonport
 - Finalizing plan to remove the tires above ground on parish property
 - **Carencro Wastewater Treatment Plant:**
 - **Identified over \$20 million in savings** for new wastewater treatment plant by comparing similarly situated cities and systems and provided other assistance for Mayor Charlotte Cavalier
 - **L'Alumina (Bauxite):**
 - Red dust environmental hazard has existed for **>10 years**

- **Within one year**, Cooperative Agreement signed between Ascension Parish, L'Alumina, and LDEQ for partial closure, with trial of innovative approach to cap the bauxite mountains
 - **Marler Ford (Asbestos):**
 - A pile of asbestos material in the center of downtown Colfax for more than two years; now, owner donating property to the city
 - Resolution Obtained: LDEQ's Enforcement issued compliance orders, Court ordered property owner to clean up, and LDEQ used Brownfields to conduct Phase I assessment with EPA approval
 - **Distinctive Cleaners (Polychlorophs):**
 - For more than 3 years, owner had extremely high levels of contamination and exorbitant cleanup costs
 - Tiger Team identified cause of high levels, and appropriate solution and costs for cleanup
 - **Delta Biofuel (Future Energy Generation Alternatives):**
 - Bagasse, a fibrous waste product from sugarcane turned into pellets that are used heat boilers in the UK
 - Goal: Facilitate more production to remove legacy bagasse piles
- **Water Infrastructure Improvement**
 - Hosted Regional Seminars to assist elected officials and communities by providing financial and technical assistance:
 - 100+ year water infrastructure that is degrading in rural Louisiana
 - Compromised areas with high discharge levels
 - Program included information on LDEQ's Clean Water State Revolving Fund, Water Finance Exchange, Communities Unlimited, Louisiana Rural Water Association, and other state agencies
- **Motor Fuels Trust Fund:** Executed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Secretary of State for gain larger return on its principal
 - Interest from .01% c to 2.24% now, resulting in increase of 1,400% return, e.g. \$318,558 (YEAR) to \$5 million (in 2025)
- **Created an Underground Storage Tank (UST) Grant Program:**
 - Offered up to \$150,000 per award for eligible UST operators to modernize equipment and prevent environmental harm

Fighting Governmental Overreach

- **Litigation**
 - **Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC):** LDEQ-LA joined lawsuit to challenge Nuclear Regulatory Commission for states to have the authority to permit and regulate small modular reactors, and other facilities
 - **DENKA:**

- Led declaration (via press conference) against EPA that Louisiana treated differently with regulation to implement emission reductions (60 days vs. 2 years) announcement
 - Highlighted LDEQ’s authority withdrawn, a novel act of federal overreach on the [rule](#)
- **[Greenfield Grain Elevator](#)**: Led the reversal of Department of the Interior’s Designation of ~23,000 acres with the three river parishes for National Historic Designation, resulting in future economic development within the breadbasket of Louisiana
- **Section 404 of Clean Water Act**
 - LDEQ submitted to U.S. Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Hearing “America Builds” that LDEQ authorized **over 30,000 permits annually**
 - Corps uses National Historic Preservation Action Section 106 to delay permits; a record to pursue Section 404 to be independent from US Army Corps
 - EPA weaponized regulations implementing Title VI
 - LDEQ/LA interested in CWA Section 404 Assumption
- **Jurisdictional Determination of Wetlands**
 - Submitted request to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to re-evaluate all jurisdictional determinations, particularly along Mississippi River and coastal areas, since Supreme Court decision in *Sackett v. Environmental Protection Agency* (2023) on wetlands must have a continuous surface connection to bodies of water and EPA-Corps interpretative guidance issued by Administrator Zeldin
 - Corps’ continued failure to implement *Sackett* and EPA-Corps Guidance results in significant overreach and very high mitigation costs for industry and businesses
 - Corps failure to act results in numerous Title V and PSD extensions and research then required by LDEQ
- **Formosa**
 - Requested Corps to reinstate the suspended permit, as the basis of environmental justice for requiring an Environmental Impact Statement no longer exists since Trump’s 2025 Executive Orders
 - Issued 3rd extension of Title V permit since Corps has failed to act on permit

National Presence

- LDEQ Secretary Giacometto published **three (3) national opinion pieces**
 - [American Energy is Sparked in Louisiana](#), published March 5, 2025
 - [Bayou Bureaucracy: In Louisiana, We Can Fish and Drill](#), published April 17, 2024
 - [Louisiana Is Positioning Itself to Power the Southern Renaissance](#), published September 5, 2024

LDEQ Outreach

- **Shaping an Informed Public Perception**
 - **Secretary Giacometto - 196 visits and meetings** across Louisiana
 - **Secretary Giacometto - ~60% of Louisiana parishes** visited within 13 months
 - [Hosted First Lady Sharon Landry](#) of Louisiana with agency overview, facility tour, and introduction to LDEQ's initiatives like LEAP
 - **LDEQ Communications Team:**
 - Held **three (3) Press Conferences:** Two (2) on L'Alumina, including the signing of Memorandum of Understanding with Ascension Parish; and one in LaPlace on Denka, only manufacturer of chloroprene in the U.S.
 - Responded to **67 media requests**
 - Updated all LDEQ social media handles for consistency in delivery of messaging
 - **Press Releases: 100% increase** – 64 published in 2024, 32 published in 2023
 - **LinkedIn: 300% increase** – 95 posts in 2024, 33 posts in 2023
 - 64,781 and 9,399 organic impressions on LinkedIn
 - **Instagram:**
 - LDEQ account created
 - 42 posts generating 9,399 organic impressions
 - **YouTube:** Over 300% increase – 13 videos in 2024, 4 videos in 2023
 - **X / Twitter:** 157 posts in 2024, 103 posts in 2023

- **Driving Community Development**
 - **Small Business/Small Community Environmental Assistance Program:**
 - Assisted **861 small businesses and small communities**
 - Provided 5,639 assists, such as 466 site visits, 2,433 phone calls, 2,740 letters and emails, and 1,541 general permit assistance
 - **Benton Wastewater Collection System:**
 - Permit approval for the Benton project was expedited to help move this vital project into completion
 - **Maximized Federal Infrastructure Funding:**
 - Positioned LDEQ as the lead state agency for implementation of **Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)** water funding
 - Secured \$100M+ in loan commitments for municipalities across the state
 - **Volkswagen Mitigation Trust Settlement Fund:** LDEQ distributed 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
 - **Enhanced Community Engagement and Financial Tools:**
 - Created an affordability assessment model to guide investment in rural communities
 - **Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF):**

- Closed **19 loans totaling \$127,697,012** for projects ranging from \$500,000 to \$38,948,200 across Louisiana
- Produced LDEQ's first CWSRF Annual Report
- Launched new CWSRF landing page and materials on website
- **Lake Charles Sewer Loop Project:** Awarded **\$20 million to the City of Lake Charles** for project to help to eliminate wet weather overflow, address capacity issues, and aid in transferring wastewater flows to the current discharge point leading to the Sarver Lift Station

LDEQ Culture

- **Employee Recognition Programs Instituted in 2024**
 - **Secretary Working Social:** Quarterly voluntary lunch for employees to talk with Secretary on LDEQ programs and initiatives, and employees' hobbies and extracurricular activities focused on themes
 - **Employee of the Month:** Employees nominate their peers for excellence in job performance and customer service. Established a selection committee for standard and objective approach
- **Volunteering & Philanthropy – LDEQ promoted plus Secretary participation**
 - Three (3) Keep Louisiana Beautiful events
- **Regional Offices:** LDEQ Secretary Giacometto visited to all eight regions within first six months of administration
 - One (1) National Cleanup Day and two (2) Love the Boot Week
 - LDEQ Secretary participated in Ascension Parish – Hazardous Household Clean Up Days (twice a year, in spring and fall)
- **Advanced Engagement with the Governor's Office:**
 - Held **FIRST** ever All Employee Town Halls
 - Conducted **FIRST** Employee Town Hall with a Louisiana Governor, Governor Jeff Landry
- **Welcoming Atmosphere for LDEQ Headquarters**
 - Modernized the front office and floors of agency headquarters with signage, logos, and state leadership (Governor Landry and Secretary headshots)
- **Employee Onboarding:** Improved Employee Onboarding and education for new staff through the creation of presentations for all LDEQ offices

Modernizing LDEQ's Infrastructure

- **Developing a Dashboard for LDEQ – LDEQ's #1 Priority**
 - More than **6,200 man hours** on transforming LDEQ IT and data infrastructure
 - LDEQ has 71 programs/technology, 19 operating systems identified

- Outlined workflow for 232 types – permit, accreditations, licenses, etc.
- More than 900 internal and external workflow processes identified
- Dashboard = Regulatory Assurance for businesses and the State
 - Streamlines internal processes, provides transparency to public and applicants and accountability to LDEQ personnel and leadership
- **Agency Activities (permits, accreditations, certificates, etc.) issued: 30,758**

- **LDEQ 2-day Innovation Summit (July 2024)**
 - Demo of LDEQ Dashboard for Permitting & Permit phases
 - More than 100 environmental professionals, industry leaders, state officials, and stakeholders attendees
 - 2nd Annual Innovation Summit based on survey and feedback of participants

- **Initiated CROMERR (Cross-Media Electronic Reporting Rule) Approval by EPA**
 - Enables LDEQ to submit documents and reports electronically to EPA. LDEQ has worked on this for over 3 years; Secretary Giacometto completed within nine (9) months

- **Strengthened Emergency Response**
 - Created **5** Emergency Response Strike Teams across the state
 - Improved regional response coordination and readiness
 - Re-evaluated fire/evacuation drills on LDEQ properties for better and safer alternatives for evacuation routes for emergency situations

- **Improved Solid Waste Capacity Report:** Updated cumbersome reports of years past with more precise and detailed breakdowns of landfill capacity, thanks to advancements in data organization and visualization

- **System/Document Logistics**
 - Transitioned reallocations, permanent statuses, and position description forms from manual hard copy signatures to electronic signature
 - Compiled an agency-wide list of **external reports** completed by Divisions
 - These reports include documents required to meet legislative, grant, and federal requirements along with frequency of submittals
 - **Evaluated Delegated Authority** of staff: Reviewed all documents produced by agency staff and had Legal review requirements for delegated authority for each document type

- **Cost Coding:** Initiated cost coding for all LDEQ programs to understand the allocation and expenditures of each program, providing transparency on agency funds and prioritizing projects