

State of Oregon
Department of Environmental Quality

Memorandum

Date: March 29, 2019
To: Oregon Sustainability Board
From: Brian Boling, Interim Central Services Division administrator
Subject: 2018 report on agency sustainability

Chair Miller and members of the Oregon Sustainability Board,

I serve as the sponsoring member of the agency's Leadership Team for the topic of sustainability at DEQ and I am proud to present the 2018 report on agency sustainability from the Department of Environmental Quality. DEQ sees sustainability as one cross-programmatic way we can walk our talk as an environmental agency and help build a more sustainable future for our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this report, and thank you for your commitment to the people of Oregon.

Sincerely,



Brian Boling
Interim Central Services Division administrator
DEQ Sustainability Team sponsor

DEQ Sustainability Plan

2018 Update

Submitted to the Oregon Sustainability Board



DEQ Sustainability Team

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*DEQ is a leader in restoring,
maintaining and enhancing
the quality of Oregon's air,
land and water.*



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1. Background of DEQ's sustainability work

In 2017, DEQ formally re-engaged its Sustainability Team after a period of limited work due to staffing changes and agency priority-setting. At that time, the Sustainability Team developed a short chronology of agency activities to serve as an historical document and shared understanding of sustainability activities at the agency. A version of that chronology is included to provide the same history and context for current DEQ sustainability activities. DEQ has engaged in sustainability activities in various ways since the agency was created in 1969; however, this chronology only covers activities since the mid-2000s when the agency created and implemented its first formal sustainability plan.

2004-2008

- DEQ participates in the Interagency Sustainability Coordinators Network, a DAS-organized group of sustainability coordinators from many state agencies (*continues involvement to-date*)
- DEQ implements its 2004 Sustainability Plan, with four main goals (one internal goals, three programmatic/external goals)
 - Goal one: Promote internal activities for sustainability
 - Goal two: Encourage broader reuse of wastewater
 - Goal three: Promote clean diesel engines and fuels
 - Goal four: Protect public health from mercury and other toxic chemicals

2009

- Agency develops a 30-year sustainability plan, with a timeline of goals/outcomes within an overall framework of sustainability, involving about 50 staff in a multi-day planning and “backcasting” process using [The Natural Step framework](#)
- About 15 DEQ staff are trained in providing The Natural Step training, with the intent of training all staff, state-wide, in the framework and principles

2010

- Spring: Two Portland State University undergrad interns develop research papers and recommendations on agency activities for more sustainable procurement/purchasing and waste reduction for DEQ offices

2011

- Formal DEQ Sustainability Team activities are put on pause in late 2011, as a way to free up staff capacity to implement the agency's Outcome Based Management System
- A reduced team of two or three staff continue to meet monthly and track possible sustainability activities and perform limited data collection and planning through 2013

2013

- Agency leadership approves resource reallocation of up to 10 percent time, for two staff, to re-engage on sustainability efforts for the agency

- Presentation to the Oregon Sustainability Board, at the Board's request, on agency plans regarding progress and activities
- Staff review the 2009 Plan and develop near-term year goals of 20 percent reductions in carbon, water use and wastewater in three to five years
 - Baseline tracking of fleet vehicle mileage begins and is incorporated as an Outcome Measure within the agency's metrics and measures systems
 - Attempts to begin tracking baseline electricity and wastewater at DEQ offices is unsuccessful; project is delayed but goals retained for future measurement

2014

- Sustainability metric reporting, on fleet vehicle mileage as a GHG and carbon emissions proxy, begins as part of agency Outcome Based Management Quarterly Measure Reports and continues to-date

2015

- The Northwest Region office relocates to a renovated building in the Lloyd District. The new building includes a number of more-sustainable amenities, including furniture, floor coverings and office environments that do not contain specified toxic chemicals, in consultation with agency toxics specialists and Materials Management Staff
 - The office is also part of a larger multi-building development that uses a wastewater recycling system called NORM, a Natural Organic Recycling Machine, improved lighting fixtures for less energy use and other specific items for more sustainable operations
- The Sustainability Team grows in scope and size, incorporating several additional DEQ staffers and taking on additional research efforts for tracking agency paper use, enhanced research on electric and water use, re-evaluation of 2009 Plan/goals and potential re-write of the Plan to reflect the 2011 pause and subsequent slowdown of activity

2016

- Stacey Luddington, an AmeriCorps fellow and temporary DEQ staffer, prepares a Scope 3 GHG analysis for DEQ (July 1, 2012, through June 30, 2013/DEQ Fiscal Year 2013)
 - The final report includes a series of recommendations for emissions reduction implementation at the agency and state level
- The Headquarters office moves into the Lloyd District building, consolidating all Portland-based staff into one more-sustainable location
 - This office location includes individual sub-meters for each floor's electrical use, with the intent to track electrical use at the building and reduce use over time in accordance with sustainability plans and state direction (*tracking started January 2018*)

2017

- The Sustainability Team is formally re-engaged, with expanded membership and team charter!
- Team meets twice a month to discuss actions at the Portland office and opportunities for activities and engagement at DEQ's offices across the state

2018

- The team implements its workplan for the year and clarifies its scope for near- and long-term goals
 - April: The Sustainability Team engages with Portland-based Oregon Health Authority staff for an energy reduction competition at the Portland DEQ office
 - Summer: The agency's lab, located in Hillsboro, establishes its own Green Team for specific actions and projects, meets regularly and is implementing events and activities at the lab to meet agency sustainability goals
 - October: Team begins collecting redeemable beverage containers to establish a fund that any DEQ staff can access through a simple application for funds to support sustainability events and activities at work

2. Operational and internal focus of DEQ's Sustainability Plan

When developing the agency's sustainability goals and related plan, DEQ staff assessed whether to focus the actions and goals on operational/internal activities or programmatic/external goals. The group at that time decided to use the operational/internal approach for near-term goals and plans, with notation to support the longer-term integration of programmatic/external activities.

As an environmental regulatory agency, DEQ has a unique opportunity to influence Oregon's environment and sustainability on a state level, through the implementation of its rules, permits and other regulatory tools. DEQ also has an opportunity and an obligation to assess agency sustainability from an operations/internal focus. This operational/internal approach is more in line with sustainability plans and activities that other state agencies undertake, such as paper use reduction and increasing recycled content in paper used, reductions in fleet vehicle miles traveled and improvements to agency water and energy conservation efforts.

In this current Sustainability Plan, and in the near-term goals and objectives of DEQ's Sustainability Team, the focus remains on the operational/internal activities and opportunities for sustainable choices. DEQ's Sustainability Team retains the longer-term goal of evaluating its agency programs, rules and activities for an understanding of how to improve the statewide application of sustainable practices, and drive more sustainable outcomes, through environmental regulatory structure. The Team developed a set of guiding principles:

Vision: Nurture a "sustainability first" workplace culture at DEQ that is demonstrated in our internal operations, strategic planning for internal and external activities and the implementation of agency programs.

Mission: Engage all staff with the principles, actions and concepts of sustainability through workplace-based actions and continuous improvements related to sustainability at DEQ.

Purpose: Provide a formal venue and agency resources for strategic planning, discussion and project development, initiation and management related to sustainability at DEQ.

3. Other agency plans incorporating sustainability goals, outcomes or objectives

In addition to the agency's formal Sustainability Plan and Sustainability Team, a number of other program plans and work teams incorporate the principles, activities and goals of the Plan and Team into their daily operations. Examples of plans and teams are listed below, with links to available plans or other supporting documentation as appropriate.

- **Data and Information Management Team and Governance Team:** Staff and manager teams that make the guiding decisions for major IT processes, have formally incorporated sustainability of the products used and long-term stability of systems, as a decision principle when considering IT actions, including a major IT purchase for a new Environmental Data Management system to be used at DEQ
- **Water Quality Division:** Strategic Planning Document and Adaptive Management Strategy for Water Quality Assessment, Permitting and Monitoring; Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund Program (incorporation of green and sustainable infrastructure in loan and grant opportunities)
- **Air Quality Division:** Operates the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reporting Program (tracks GHG emissions from permitted facilities); Electric Vehicle and Clean Fuels Programs both help drive down transportation-based emissions and co-pollutants from vehicle fuels
- **Land Quality Division:** Risk-based approach to remediation in the Cleanup Program; development and use of the Consumption Based Emissions Inventory
- **Materials Management Program:** The program's foundational planning document, *Materials Management in Oregon 2050 Vision and Framework*, includes sustainability principles as a life-cycle approach to materials; grants program incorporates equity and sustainability elements in its review and scoring process
 - <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/FilterDocs/MManagementOR.pdf>
- **Team Toxics:** A cross-program team of agency staff who work on projects to reduce the use, release, exposure and impacts of toxic chemicals that are identified in the 2018 DEQ Integrated Toxics Reduction Strategy
- **Agency Wellness Team:** A required committee for employee wellness at the agency. A Sustainability Team collaborator for active transportation and other projects that incorporate both wellness and sustainability elements

4. Equity approach to sustainability

DEQ's approach to sustainability extends beyond economic and environmental considerations, and the agency is committed to ensuring its policies, operations and internal goals also advance equity for its employees and all people across the state. Part of this equity-focused approach to sustainability is the incorporation of environmental justice principles into agency activities.

Environmental justice, as an outgrowth of the American Civil Rights Movement, is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, sex, national origin or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

DEQ established its agency environmental justice policy in 1997, in relationship to the agency's delegated responsibilities from EPA; however, the 2008 state law provided more specific direction to the agency and provided a mechanism and body to address environmental justice with the creation of the Environmental Justice Task Force. Similar to the Oregon Sustainability Board in its charge to oversee disparate actions at many complex state agencies and move the state toward a desired future, the Task Force provides policy recommendations and advocacy for environmental justice issues across the state.

Since 2008, a defined list of agencies, mostly in the Natural Resources group, have been required to provide an annual report to the Environmental Justice Task Force on agency work for furthering environmental justice, and comply with the following obligations:

- (1) In making a determination whether and how to act, consider the effects of the action on environmental justice issues.
- (2) Hold hearings at times and in locations that are convenient for people in the communities that will be affected by the decisions stemming from the hearings.
- (3) Engage in public outreach activities in the communities that will be affected by decisions of the agency.
- (4) Create a citizen advocate position that is responsible for:
 - (a) Encouraging public participation;
 - (b) Ensuring that the agency considers environmental justice issues; and
 - (c) Informing the agency of the effect of its decisions on communities traditionally underrepresented in public processes.

In evaluating actions and activities that support environmental and economic sustainability, DEQ uses an environmental justice approach to ensure that the actions, such as promoting the development of greener chemistry alternatives for [janitorial products](#), also support equity, meaningful engagement and fair decisions-making for the people these actions may affect.

5. Short-term goals and metrics

The Sustainability Team maintains a multi-year workplan and has initiated internal sustainability practices at DEQ offices. Some highlights from 2018 include:

- Tracking energy (electrical) usage for DEQ's Portland office, with approximately 300 staff across six floors of one building, began in January 2018. To advertise the tracking and engage DEQ employees in reducing energy consumption, the Energy Challenge was organized, which was a four week energy challenge competition. Energy usage was tracked for each DEQ-occupied floor, as well as the Oregon Health Authority. The competition was between DEQ floors, internally, and between DEQ and OHA as competing agencies.
- Collecting redeemable bottles that employees use in the office, with the intent of creating a Sustainability Team Fund for funding small internal DEQ projects
- DEQ tracks fleet vehicle GHG emissions from usage based on fuel purchases and miles travelled. Emissions are calculated monthly and reported out through the agency's measures reporting system each quarter.

- DEQ’s Lab established an active Green Team in 2018 to expand sustainability practices at the lab. A glove recycling program was implemented in 2018 and energy use reduction will be the primary focus over the next year.
- The Oregon Sustainability Board and DAS collaboratively developed and conducted a state employee survey concerning sustainability attitudes and activities. The [results](#) were released in October 2018. The Sustainability Team will be reviewing the results to understand how to integrate responses into employee sustainability education and engagement in the coming year.

6. Long-term/future goals

DEQ’s Sustainability Team maintains a set of longer-term operational, or internal goals, and an objective of addressing long-term programmatic, or external, sustainability goals. Some of the longer-term efforts include:

- Upgrading agency vehicles to more efficient and non-gasoline options as the cars “age out” of the state fleet, in accordance with DAS guidelines and transportation-related efforts for GHG emission reductions as a state
 - Currently, DEQ’s Portland office has 22 fleet vehicles, of which half are conventional and half are cleaner vehicles
 - Three are full-electric and two plug-in hybrids, with 12 charging stations in the parking area
 - Six “standard” (non-plug-in) hybrids
 - The agency plans to replace two “standard” hybrids with plug-in hybrids in early 2019
 - The remaining 11 vehicles are conventional and will be transitioned to appropriate, and cleaner, options as the vehicles age-out of use
 - DEQ Lab’s fleet inventory includes 14 conventional vehicles (vans, trucks, SUVs) and four hybrids. The Lab plans to update its fleet with at least one electric vehicle and charging station
- Strengthening sustainability requirements and maximizing environmental benefits in its various grant and loan programs
 - Oregon’s Clean Water State Loan Revolving Fund provides approximately \$75 million, annually, in loans for water infrastructure and systems work, and EPA includes some sustainability requirements in the application. The loan application protocol will be evaluated to determine whether additional opportunities exist to incorporate more robust sustainability criteria.
 - Materials Management dispenses approximately \$500,000 annually (\$600,000 in 2018) in grants, which provides an opportunity for moving Oregonians in the direction of “producing and using materials responsibly, conserving resources, protecting the environment and living well” as outlined in [2050 Vision for Materials Management in Oregon](#). Requirements for grant applications will be reviewed to determine the feasibility of expanding the existing sustainability criteria
 - DEQ is providing grants from the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Fund to reduce diesel emissions from at least 450 school buses. Over the next ten years approximately \$72.9M in funding will be available for diesel emission reduction projects that maximize benefits for vulnerable populations, prioritize pollution reduction in areas of the state with the highest

emissions of nitrogen oxides and particulate matter from diesel engines, and maximize pollution reduction cost effectiveness.

- Using the DEQ Lab Green Team’s longer-range goals as a model set of best practices for other DEQ offices starting or re-establishing Green Teams
 - Goals include specific reductions in energy use, water consumption and toxic chemical usage, continual improvement in recycling practices and employee empowerment in regard to sustainability practices

7. Progress: Tracking and management

DEQ uses an Outcome-Based Management System, established in 2014, to track 94 metrics that incorporate agency operations, external performance and general organizational measures. The agency holds Quarterly Measure Reviews to assess progress, evaluate opportunities for correction when measures are off-target and maintain close attention to agency metrics. When measures are trending negatively, staff are tasked with completing a seven-step problem solving process, integrated across the agency and developed in accordance with principles of the Lean-Kaizen performance and process management.

In addition to the agency’s measures, DEQ reports annually on 14 Key Performance Measures. These KPMs illustrate agency success across its programmatic capabilities, and were incorporated into the Quarterly Measure Reports in 2018 for better alignment of the two tracking mechanisms.

DEQ, like many other state agencies, also uses periodic employee satisfaction surveys and other internal means to track ways the agency can better support its employees as we work to be leaders in protecting, maintaining and enhancing the quality of Oregon’s air, land and water.

8. Summary and next steps

DEQ’s Sustainability Team has adapted through many iterations over the past decade, and 2018 was a year of significant growth and capacity-building for the team. As the revitalized Sustainability Team matures, these reports to the Oregon Sustainability Board will reflect the actions and planning for agency activities moving Oregon toward a more sustainable future.