

**STRATEGIC  
PLAN  
2020-2024**

**MISSISSIPPI**  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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# 1. Comprehensive Mission Statement

Our mission is to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of present and future generations of Mississippians by conserving and improving our environment and fostering wise economic growth through focused research and responsible regulation.



## 2. Philosophy –The philosophy of the MDEQ is captured in the Core Values listed below:

- Truth is the foundation of everything we do.
- We vigilantly resist bias and prejudice.
- We respond promptly, courteously, and as completely as possible to every question, complaint, or request for assistance.
- Inside the agency, we respect the capabilities, responsibilities, and contributions of every member of the MDEQ family. Outside the agency, we respect everyone, regardless of who they are or why we are brought together.
- We strive for a secure, stimulating, rewarding work environment in which all members of the MDEQ family are empowered and encouraged to reach their full potential.
- We are committed to the highest standards of performance in every aspect of our jobs.
- We are accountable, individually and collectively, for effective, efficient management and use of the resources provided to accomplish our mission.

## 3. Relevant Statewide Goals and Benchmarks

(Source: Building a Better Mississippi: The Statewide Strategic Plan for Performance and Budgetary Success, July 2014)

**Statewide Goal #1 - Natural Resources** – To ensure that current and future generations have access to the state’s abundant natural resources through restoration, protection, conservation, and wise development of those resources.

**Statewide Goal #2 – Infrastructure** – To ensure that construction and maintenance of infrastructure are adequate to meet the needs of citizens and the business community and to foster economic growth.

**Statewide Goal #3 – Health** – To protect Mississippians from risks to public health and to provide them with the health-related information and access to quality healthcare necessary to increase the length and quality of their lives.

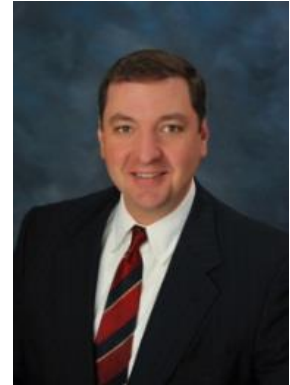
**Statewide Goal #4 – Economic Development** – To develop a robust state economy that provides the opportunity for productive employment for all Mississippians.

**Statewide Goal #5 – Public Safety and Order** – To protect the public’s safety, including providing timely and appropriate responses to emergencies and disasters and to operate a fair and effective system of justice.

**Statewide Goal #6 – Government and Citizens** – To create an efficient government and an informed citizenry that helps to address social problems.

## 4. Overview of the Agency Five-Year Strategic Plan

I am pleased to present the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality’s (MDEQ’s) strategic plan outlining the agency’s goals, objectives, and strategies for fiscal years 2020 to 2024. The plan provides a clear and concise blueprint for how the agency will protect human health and the environment over the next several years, and how we will measure our performance. Despite the economic challenges over the past several years, MDEQ’s performance during that time has remained stable. Ever increasing and changing federal mandates, fiscal burdens and key management personnel retirements and resignations continue to cause operating challenges, but I am confident that MDEQ staff has the determination and resolve to overcome these obstacles.



**Gary C. Rikard**

MDEQ continues to focus on the following:

- Protecting health, safety, welfare, and the environment;
- Managing air quality to ensure compliance with ambient air quality or other health-based standards;
- Protecting soil and water from hazardous and solid waste, and petroleum products;
- Managing, mitigating, remediating, reclaiming and restoring our land and water resources;
- Maintaining sustainable quantities of groundwater and surface water;
- Maintaining and improving groundwater and surface water quality;
- Preventing, preparing for, and responding to environmental emergencies;
- Encouraging and educating Mississippi citizens, businesses, and communities to engage in environmentally responsible behaviors; and,
- Being a good steward of the human, financial, and physical resources provided to the agency by the citizens of the state.

The programs and initiatives administered by the agency further our mission to protect human health and the environment. The staff at the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality is committed to conserving and improving our state’s abundant natural resources and will continue to work together to achieve our mission. We are proud to be the steward of the state’s air, land, and water, and we appreciate the support of our citizens and elected officials.

## 5. Agency's Internal/External Assessment

MDEQ has identified several internal and external factors that will influence the agency's ability to achieve its targeted performance goals. The agency has been strategically planning for these possibilities and will, as it has in the past, strive to meet these challenges proactively.

Before discussing specific influential factors, it is important to note that, while MDEQ has been able to meet the required performance goals in the past, our ability to continue to meet the goals is getting increasingly difficult. Funding reductions coupled with unprecedented turnover rates due to the retirement and resignation of key management personnel have resulted in the agency operating on very lean staffing levels. As it relates to the factors below, any additional fiscal or workforce setback could greatly affect our ability to meet the targeted performance goals, and more importantly, jeopardize our ability to meet the agency's core mission.

### A. Internal Factors

#### i. Recruitment and Retention of Professional Staff

The single most significant internal or external factor that could jeopardize MDEQ's success in achieving its targeted performance goals is the agency's ability to recruit and retain qualified engineers, scientists, IT, and other specialized professionals. In FY 2018, 146 of the 386 MDEQ employees on staff have less than five years of service (38% of agency employees). In FY 2014, 79 (20% of agency employees) had less than five years of service. Additionally, only 10% of our current staff have 10 to 15 years of experience. Historically, the Agency maintained approximately 20% in the 10 to 15 year-range. More than ever before, MDEQ staff must be on the cutting edge of environmental science and engineering, as well as information technology, which supports the core efforts of the agency. The staff must be able to completely understand and act upon new and changing federal regulations and new technologies when they write permits, ensure compliance, and explore all the environmental options that benefit Mississippi. It is imperative that MDEQ have technically proficient staff in place, appropriate for the expanding opportunities in the state's economy.

Over the past few years, significant private sector job growth and salary increases have strained the agency's ability to recruit and retain technical staff. We are in competition for qualified personnel. MDEQ's inability to offer competitive compensation has drastically affected its ability to successfully compete with private industry and other governmental organizations (including other Mississippi agencies) who are offering higher salaries and better benefits. With neither across-the-board job class realignments nor cost of living adjustments, MDEQ's salaries have remained essentially unchanged since 2002. In fact, state employee "take home" pay has been reduced due to state health insurance premium and employee PERS contribution increases. Further, employee benefits have been reduced and retirement eligibility requirements have increased. MDEQ aggressively recruits statewide but it is growing more difficult to hire people who are willing to make the commitment to state service, especially in high demand fields such as engineering, science, and information technology.

**New Employees:** MDEQ has become a training ground for college graduates who leave for better opportunities in the private sector, many times within the first two years of employment. This “revolving door” has cost the agency monetarily and jeopardized the continuity of valuable expertise. Additionally, management has become increasingly challenged by a developing pattern through which significant agency resources are expended to train new staff only to have them leave just as a high degree of productivity is achieved.

More importantly, staffing turnover adversely affects the regulated community. Industry leaders remind us regularly they need MDEQ to have trained staff that can address the highly technical issues they face regarding ever-changing federal regulations.

**Mid-Level Employees:** Exit interviews reveal that mid-level employees are leaving, in part, due to frustration over a lack of salary increases. Many of these employees have not seen salary realignments or cost of living adjustments during their tenure in state service and do not have hope they will in the foreseeable future. Losing highly trained mid-level staff is extremely difficult for any organization because of the time and resources invested to train them and develop them for management roles.

**Retirement-eligible Employees:** Retirements in recent years have spiked due to more staff retiring as soon as they become eligible. Relative to past trends, fewer senior staff are remaining employed at the agency beyond 25 years, with many seeking a “second career” in the private sector. Accordingly, retaining institutional knowledge is a struggle. In FY2017 and FY2018, the agency sustained major losses in upper and mid level management personnel due to retirements.

MDEQ currently has a total of 386 employees. Since fiscal year 2013, MDEQ has lost 138 employees to resignations and 110 employees to retirement (248 total employees). This equates to almost 65% of MDEQ’s 386 employee workforce. In addition, over 21% of our current workforce is retirement eligible. These trends are not sustainable for training and retaining highly technical staff.

## **ii. Loss of Institutional Knowledge**

In FY2017 and FY2018, MDEQ experienced heavy losses in upper and mid-level management to retirements and resignations. The immense loss of institutional knowledge held by these individuals in their respective areas, combined with the trickledown effect of replacing them and our difficulty in hiring and retaining qualified staff, are taking a toll on our ability to meet the performance goals as well as our obligations to EPA. We are losing programmatic knowledge faster than we can replace it compromising our ability to meet our performance goals.

## **iii. Statutory Organizational Structure**

When the MDEQ was established in 1989, the Legislature created a specific organizational structure for the agency in the state statute. Over the years the agency’s scope of work and responsibilities has had to adjust to changes in federal laws and regulations, to the various manmade and natural disasters, and to the public’s changing expectations and needs. In the last few years, MDEQ has reorganized several divisions in response to budget constraints, loss of technical expertise, and struggle with hiring and

retaining qualified staff. In the future, MDEQ may need a reorganization of its statutory structure to streamline and consolidate various processes, which could require legislative action.

## **B. External Factors**

### **i. Federal Regulations and Rules**

As new federal regulations are proposed or existing federal regulations change, the demands on MDEQ staff increase significantly. When the EPA proposes a new rule, or changes an existing rule, MDEQ staff must carefully research and determine the potential impact on Mississippi, engage with the people and industries that might be impacted, provide education and compliance assistance to affected industries, and be prepared to revise or completely rewrite portions of the Mississippi regulations. MDEQ staff must become experts in environmental science and engineering and also be highly competent communicators to adequately safeguard Mississippi's interests.

Although the current federal administration has indicated an intent to roll back some of the regulatory initiatives of the previous administration, we still have to administer ever-expanding and changing regulatory programs including tightening of National Air Ambient Quality Standards (NAAQS) under the Clean Air Act; the re-defining of Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) under the Clean Water Act; the Stream Protection Rule under the Surface Mining and Reclamation Program; and new electronic documentation and data management requirements. Managing such mandates at the state level requires a great deal of work by MDEQ staff, although both state appropriated funding and federal grant funding to do so continues to decrease. If MDEQ is to protect our state's interests with reasonable and responsible regulation, we will need additional resources. While the agency actively prepares for potential impacts of new or changing federal regulations, their scope and timing is uncertain. MDEQ is committed to being a leader in new technologies, technical assistance, outreach, transparency, sound engineering, and applied science, but federal regulations are continually evolving. MDEQ needs the resources to be prepared to address these complex environmental issues.

### **ii. Manmade and Natural Disasters**

MDEQ has specific Emergency Support Functions in the Mississippi Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, including being the Primary Agency for Oil and Hazardous Materials. MDEQ also plays a major role as a Support Agency for nine other functions in the Plan such as Public Works and Engineering, which include Dam Safety, Debris Management, and Wastewater. While statewide media attention is directed at the agency when there is a large event like a hurricane or the *Deepwater Horizon* incident, MDEQ's role in manmade and natural disasters is an ongoing job. MDEQ maintains 24-hour on call response capabilities throughout the state for a variety of events that include: highway responses, maritime responses, train derailments, industrial releases, fish kills, and dam failures. MDEQ's role in the response to disasters and in the recovery afterwards is growing. It is difficult to predict how and when these events will occur and what MDEQ resources and expertise will be needed. In the past, MDEQ had sufficient depth of staff to provide these services with minimal impact to our core functions. Due to budget cuts, staff retention issues and position reductions, MDEQ no longer has sufficient depth to respond

without significant impact to our core programs. Some of this was seen during the BP Oil Spill resulting in the doubling and tripling of permit backlogs.

In addition, MDEQ staff members are called into action when unprecedented severe weather events create widespread flooding and tornados. These events create additional attention to the importance on the dam safety and debris disposal programs. Severe weather events create an increased waste-disposal need throughout the state which leads to landfills being filled with debris that was not accounted for. Meanwhile, the state's inventory of High Hazard dams has increased because of the growth in downstream development throughout the state. The failure of these dams would threaten lives and property. Finally, as the local economies are more and more connected to communities throughout the world, Mississippi must be prepared to respond to pandemics while being able to continue the core government functions.

The department is uniquely qualified to provide the technical expertise to protect health and welfare and the environment in the time of manmade and natural disasters, but must also be able to provide necessary manpower in such situations. Predicting the unprecedented is nearly impossible, but MDEQ is committed to living up to its reputation of responding to disasters of different kinds with deepening complexities without sacrificing its core responsibilities.

### **iii. Shrinking Federal Support**

With looming cuts in federal programs and grants, in addition to cuts already experienced, the State will be asked to take on even more responsibility in managing and financing programs. As these changes occur, MDEQ will need to work with public officials to evaluate priorities and clearly communicate the impact of downsizing or eliminating programs.

Over the past eight years, MDEQ's annual federal Brownfield Grant has received more reductions than increases, while more Mississippi communities have been awarded EPA Brownfield Grants. This increase in Brownfield Grant communities in Mississippi results in more MDEQ oversight of assessment and remediation projects from these community grants. The increased number of communities conducting brownfield assessment and remediation, coupled with little to no growth in federal grant dollars continue to put a strain on the level of service MDEQ provides to these communities.

In May of 2015, EPA Region 4 informed the MDEQ of its plan to reduce Mississippi's grant for managing the state's Hazardous Waste Program under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) by 20 percent. This reduction could result in up to \$250,000 less funding over the next several years. In FY2016, MDEQ sustained the first cut and we are scheduled to sustain additional cuts over the next four years. In addition, current budget proposals for EPA could force additional reductions in funding support for MDEQ's RCRA program efforts. These reductions will affect our ability to assist the state's industry in complying with the federal and state regulations governing hazardous waste management. Those facilities that will be most affected will be the small businesses around our state that generate hazardous waste but that do not always have the technical knowledge or resources to fully understand their obligations under RCRA. It is imperative that MDEQ continue to be able to assist these small businesses that are the backbone of local economies across our state. In addition, our ability to assist large manufacturers who



manage large quantities of hazardous waste, may also be diminished as we narrow our focus to core program functions such as permitting and compliance inspections of these large employers.

EPA continues to evaluate grant funding measures as it deals with changing priorities under the current administration and a push to reduce the overall funding to the agency. This is significant at a time when EPA is encouraging states to accept full responsibility and delegation of environmental programs where they are afforded. MDEQ's already limited staff is, therefore, faced with managing increased program responsibilities with fewer resources.

The Water Pollution Control Revolving Loan Fund or, as it is commonly called, the State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF) program is used to provide low interest loans to local governments to fund needed water pollution control and prevention projects. The funds are used to upgrade or replace aging wastewater (sewer) collection and/or treatment facilities. The state must provide matching funds equal to 20 percent of the federal funds. The state receives five dollars in federal funds for every dollar of matching funds. Mississippi has not been able to access all its federal allotment because the full amount of matching funds has not been appropriated by the legislature. With full matching funds, an additional \$30.2 million would be available for local communities.

## **C. Management Systems**

MDEQ utilizes staff and technology to ensure that the operation of its environmental programs and its internal operations are effective, efficient, and ethical.

MDEQ uses information and project management systems whereby assigned work can be readily and continuously tracked. These systems provide accountability through management tools designed to assist managing workloads. Managers can evaluate a group's or an individual's cycle times, productivity, commitments, schedules, and other pertinent information. Numerous Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and checklists have been developed to ensure that state and federal requirements are met and best practices are used in an efficient and effective manner. Files are maintained to ensure accountability and transparency. For federally-delegated programs, MDEQ participates with EPA in various federal oversight evaluation programs, including the State Review Framework which evaluates program effectiveness and consistency.

MDEQ programs undergo periodic reviews of financial records and for program compliance. These reviews/audits can be conducted by federal entities, the Office of the State Auditor, or independent audit firms.

MDEQ's Office of Administrative Services oversees the department's finances, financial reporting, risk management, and internal auditing, subject to strict accounting principles, as well as specific contracting and procurement rules and procedures.

## 6. Agency Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Measures

### A. Air Quality Goal: Ensure that Mississippi air quality is protective of the health and welfare of its citizens.

National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) are federal standards for the protection of human health established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that states are required to meet. Standards have been established for six pollutants (known as criteria pollutants): nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, ozone, sulfur dioxide, lead, and two sizes of particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub> – particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter, and PM<sub>2.5</sub>, which is less than 2.5 microns in diameter).

As expressed in the External Factors section (p. 5) of this Strategic Plan, EPA may change the National Standards without MDEQ's approval or consent, thus affecting our ability to meet our Performance Measures.

These standards establish health-based thresholds below which MDEQ strives to control air pollution throughout Mississippi. MDEQ maintains and operates a statewide air quality monitoring network in selected cities to track compliance with NAAQS and to report on the effectiveness of various actions taken to control air pollution and protect public health.

The overriding agency goal for air quality is to meet and maintain compliance with the NAAQS. If the NAAQS are violated in a geographic area, EPA designates these geographic areas as “nonattainment areas,” and MDEQ is responsible for developing plans for controlling pollution to meet and to restore the air quality of the area to comply with NAAQS. If an area is designated as “nonattainment,” economic development or expansion may be significantly hindered. MDEQ is committed to working with local communities to meet these standards and to developing the best state and local solutions for controlling pollution and protecting air quality. To meet this goal, there are five strategies.

#### A.1 Air Objective: Maintain Compliance with Federal Air Quality Standards

**Outcome: Percentage of Counties that Meet National Ambient Air Quality Standards**

- **Strategy (A.1.1).** Operate and maintain the statewide ambient air monitoring network in order to meet federal and state requirements.
  - **Output:** Number of days with air advisories.
  - **Efficiency:** Percentage of days with air advisories.

Monitoring for ambient air quality conditions and modeling to predict air quality impacts are required under the federal Clean Air Act. These tools, in conjunction with emissions inventory information, give MDEQ the ability to assess compliance with the NAAQS, to forecast future

compliance, and to assess the effectiveness of specific measures to control emissions, reduce levels of pollution, or both.

MDEQ provides daily forecasts of air quality conditions to the public for pollutants of concern (ozone and particulates) in the form of an Air Quality Index in selected cities throughout Mississippi. The forecasted Air Quality Index considers monitoring data; the NAAQS, which are health-based; local emission sources; and meteorological conditions and is reported on a scale of good, moderate, unhealthy for sensitive groups, unhealthy, very unhealthy, and hazardous. The index provides the public a tool to gauge the severity of pollution and potential health effects. MDEQ also provides advice on precautionary measures to minimize exposure and reduce air pollution.

- **Task (A.1.1.1):** Maintain a statewide network of meteorological monitoring stations and provide staff access to real-time pollutant and meteorological data for modeling, air quality forecasting, and other air quality management decisions.
  - **Task (A.1.1.2):** Evaluate air quality annually for compliance with the NAAQS and submit recommendations to EPA for re-designation and re-classification.
  - **Task (A.1.1.3):** Report air quality information to the public daily to inform the public of actions to help reduce air pollution and protect public health.
- **Strategy (A.1.2).** Issue, reissue, and modify air pollution control permits and coverages to ensure NAAQS and federal requirements for air pollutants are met in Mississippi.
- **Output:** Number of air permits Issued.
  - **Efficiency:** Percentage of air permits modified/issued in a timely manner.

MDEQ issues air quality permits that can be facility-specific or for categories of industrial activities. Facility-specific permits are issued to control the emissions of air pollutants into the atmosphere from the construction, modification, and operation of stationary air pollution sources. Permit limits, monitoring and recordkeeping requirements, and operational requirements are specified in these permits to ensure increases in emissions will not cause or contribute to violations of air quality standards. In some instances, MDEQ issues general permit coverages for specific categories of industrial activity such as asphalt plants.

- **Task (A.1.2.1):** Issue, reissue, and modify air pollution control permits and coverages allowing the construction and operation of air pollution sources in compliance with the NAAQS and in a manner consistent with federal and state regulations.
  - **Task (A.1.2.2):** Perform stationary source modeling to ensure permits and coverages contain limits necessary for controlling pollution to meet the NAAQs.
- **Strategy (A.1.3).** Ensure air pollution sources are in compliance with permit conditions and regulatory requirements.

- **Output:** Number of air facilities inspected.
- **Efficiency:** Percentage of air facilities inspected.
- **Efficiency:** Percentage of air facilities inspected in compliance with regulatory requirements.

Once permits are issued, it is important to make sure facilities comply with their provisions. MDEQ conducts several types of compliance assurance activities to ensure regulatory requirements and permit conditions are met. Routine on-site compliance inspections, sampling/monitoring technical reviews, compliance certification reviews and citizen complaint investigations are all performed to promote compliance with applicable requirements.

- **Task (A.1.3.1):** Provide outreach and technical assistance to help facilities comply with permits and regulatory requirements.
  - **Task (A.1.3.2):** Inspect air pollution sources to verify compliance with permits and regulations.
  - **Task (A.1.3.3):** Take enforcement actions in a consistent and timely manner to return facilities to compliance and deter future noncompliance.
- **Strategy (A.1.4).** Conduct the necessary planning to implement programs and adopt regulations to comply with federal requirements.
  - **Output:** Number of annual air emissions inventories.
    - **Task (A.1.4.1):** Collect information from companies and develop the air emissions inventory of pollutants from the various sources in the state.
    - **Task (A.1.4.2):** Work with the county officials and surrounding states to develop the maintenance plan for the area. Continue with voluntary efforts to reduce precursor emissions in the area.
    - **Task (A.1.4.3):** Maintain awareness of new federal regulations, and provide the timely updates to the federally-approved State Implementation Plan.
- **Strategy (A.1.5).** Minimize the risk of exposure to asbestos and lead-based paint.
  - **Output:** Number of asbestos or lead-based paint project reviews.

MDEQ implements regulations that specify work practices and procedures for the safe handling of asbestos and lead-based paint during demolition and/or renovation activity. The regulations also require notice of projects (notification) to allow review of planned activity for conformity with requirements before operations commence. Also, the potential hazards and specialization of asbestos abatement and lead-based paint activity require the use of properly trained individuals which MDEQ assures through certification.

- **Task (A.1.5.1):** Perform outreach and assistance to communicate requirements of the regulations to project owners and operators and assist home owners and other stakeholders for safe handling practices.
- **Task (A.1.5.2):** Perform asbestos and lead-based paint project inspections, assess regulation compliance, and address any compliance issues or problem conditions with the appropriate action (enforcement).
- **Task (A.1.5.3):** Review asbestos and lead-based paint project notifications against requirements of the regulations and direct operators for needed corrections.

## **B. Waste Management Goal: Protect Mississippi’s soil and water resources through proper nonhazardous solid waste, hazardous solid waste and petroleum product management.**

MDEQ is responsible for monitoring and controlling the generation, treatment, storage, and disposal of wastes and regulating the management of petroleum products in Underground Storage Tanks (USTs) in Mississippi. If not handled correctly, these kinds of wastes and products that MDEQ regulates have the potential to threaten human health and the environment.

**Solid waste** is a broad term that includes garbage, refuse, sludges, or other discarded materials. In general, MDEQ’s solid waste program deals with municipal and non-municipal solid waste at transfer stations, composting operations, rubbish sites, and landfills.

**Hazardous wastes** have properties that make the waste dangerous or potentially harmful to human health or the environment. In regulatory terms, a hazardous waste is either a “listed” waste (a waste that appears on one of four federal hazardous waste lists due to its potential inherent dangers) or a waste that exhibits at least one of four characteristics: ignitability, corrosivity, reactivity, or toxicity.

**Petroleum products** are not wastes. However, leaks from underground storage tanks or their associated piping systems can contaminate the environment. To prevent leaks and to minimize the extent of a leak, it is important to ensure the underground tanks are properly installed, operated, and inspected.

**B.1 Waste Objective:      Ensure statewide waste management activities focus on recycling, proper handling, transportation, and disposal to prevent release of contaminants to the environment.**

**Outcome:                      Number of Tons of Solid Waste Material Properly Disposed**

**Outcome:                      Number of Tons of Material Recycled Per Year**

- **Strategy (B.1.1).** Minimize the threat of releases of hazardous and solid wastes, and petroleum products to the environment.

MDEQ issues permits and other approvals, conducts inspections, and provides training and compliance assistance to facilities that generate, dispose of, treat, or store wastes to ensure that those wastes do not adversely impact the environment or pose a public health risk.

MDEQ also manages the state’s Underground Storage Tank (UST) Program, which is aimed at preventing and detecting leaks of petroleum products and hazardous substances. The UST program is responsible for conducting operator training, inspections, and compliance assistance at Mississippi’s 3,031 petroleum storage facilities.

- **Output:** Number of waste permits issued.
- **Efficiency:** Percentage of waste permits issued in a timely manner.
  - **Task (B.1.1):** Update state regulations as necessary to ensure consistency and compliance with state and federal laws and to address directives from the Commission on Environmental Quality.
  - **Task (B.1.1.2):** Issue and modify permits to ensure proper management of hazardous and nonhazardous solid waste.
  - **Task (B.1.1.3):** Ensure that solid waste and hazardous waste facilities meet applicable financial assurance requirements.
  - **Task (B.1.1.4):** Provide local solid waste assistance grants to local governments to encourage recycling and proper disposal of household hazardous waste.
- **Strategy (B.1.2)** Minimize and control releases from industrial and solid waste management facilities into the environment through necessary compliance and enforcement actions.
  - **Efficiency:** Percentage of waste facilities inspected.
  - **Efficiency:** Percentage of inspected waste facilities in compliance with regulatory requirements.
  - **Output:** Number of Underground Storage Tank inspections.
  - **Efficiency:** Percentage of Underground Storage Tanks in compliance with regulatory requirements.
    - **Task (B.1.2.1):** Inspect facilities that manage solid or hazardous waste or store petroleum products in Underground Storage Tanks (USTs).
    - **Task (B.1.2.2):** Issue inspection reports and, when necessary, initiate enforcement actions in a consistent and timely manner.

- **Task (B.1.2.3):** Respond appropriately to citizen inquiries and complaints in a consistent and timely manner.
- **Task (B.1.2.4):** Maximize voluntary compliance with environmental laws and regulations by providing educational outreach to businesses and units of local government.
- **Task (B.1.2.5):** Provide site-specific training to owners, operators, and employees on safe and compliant operation of UST Systems.
- **Task (B.1.2.6):** Inspect every proposed public supply water well location prior to drilling to identify all potential contaminant sources that may impact drinking water supplies and system rating using resources from the Source Water Assessment Program.

## **C. Remediation Goal: Protect human health and the environment through proper mitigation, remediation, reclamation, and restoration of natural resources.**

MDEQ learns about contaminated land or water from facility inspections, site investigations, complaints, or emergency response activities. Contamination can result from a variety of activities such as improper practices at existing facilities, accidental spills, or leaks from UST systems. MDEQ also gathers information about suspected contamination due to old landfills, illegal dumps, and abandoned facilities called uncontrolled sites. MDEQ oversees the investigation and remediation of sites that have been or are suspected to have been contaminated by toxic metals, chemicals, petroleum, or other pollutants or contaminants. MDEQ also maintains a database inventory of identified contaminated sites. MDEQ regulates coal and non-coal surface mining activities so as to minimize injurious effects by requiring proper reclamation of surface-mined lands, while balancing the economic necessities of developing our natural resources with protection of the natural environment.

**C.1 Remediation Objective:      Ensure contaminated sites are properly assessed, remediated, and redeveloped in a manner protective of human health and the environment.**

**Outcome:                                      Number of Acres “Ready for Reuse”**

- **Strategy (C.1.1).** Assess and remediate contaminated sites.

When environmental contamination is discovered, the site must be assessed to determine what contaminants are present, the concentrations, and the pathways that exist for contaminants to affect human health or the surrounding environment. Once assessed, the risk to the public and the environment is determined, and appropriate cleanup activities are initiated. Contamination is removed or controlled to ensure that human health and the environment are protected for current and future land uses.

Also, studies have shown that there are significant economic benefits associated with brownfield redevelopment. For instance, \$1 of public investment in brownfields leverages \$8 in total investment, and \$10,000 to \$13,000 in public investments creates or retains one job. Cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield properties leads to property value increases on the order of 5% to 15% for properties that are up to ¼ mile from the site. Public investment in brownfields is generally recouped from local taxes generated by the project within about three years.

- **Efficiency:** Percentage of contaminated sites that have completed assessment.
- **Efficiency:** Percentage of contaminated sites that have completed remediation.
  - **Task (C.1.1.1):** Assess contaminated sites and determine the threat to human health and the environment using risk-based targets to establish site cleanup goals.
  - **Task (C.1.1.2):** Provide ongoing oversight for long-term cleanup sites, such as Superfund sites, voluntary cleanups, brownfields, uncontrolled sites, RCRA, federal facilities, and leaking underground storage tank sites.
  - **Task (C.1.1.3):** Assist eligible entities in applying for federal grants to assess and clean up contaminated brownfield sites.
  - **Task (C.1.1.4):** Work with willing responsible parties to manage or abate risks from contamination through MDEQ’s Voluntary Cleanup Programs (i.e., Voluntary Evaluation Program and Brownfield Program). As an alternative to enforcement action, a party may enter into a voluntary agreement with MDEQ to clean up contaminated property to MDEQ standards. Once the property is cleaned up, MDEQ may provide the party a “no further action” letter so that property can be redeveloped.
  - **Task (C.1.1.5):** Initiate enforcement action, when necessary, by issuing the responsible party a notice of violation and/or ex parte order.
  - **Task (C.1.1.6):** Initiate assessment and/or cleanup of releases from leaking underground storage tanks using the Mississippi Groundwater Protection fund.
  - **Task (C.1.1.7):** Provide environmental expertise and support to local communities, businesses, and citizens as it relates to environmental contamination.
  - **Task (C.1.1.8):** Provide oversight in perpetuity for operation and management at CERCLA Superfund sites as required by federal law.
  - **Task (C.1.1.9):** Advance economic and sustainable redevelopment of contaminated sites.
  - **Task (C.1.1.10):** Provide oversight of brownfield redevelopment projects through the Mississippi Brownfields Program.

**C.2 Reclamation Objective:      Ensure lands impacted by mining activities are restored to reclamation standards that are protective of human health and the environment.**



**Outcome: Percentage of Inspected Mining Facilities in Compliance with Regulatory Requirements.**

- **Strategy (C.2.1).** Ensure that permitted coal and non-coal mining activities are conducted in an environmentally responsible manner, and that lands impacted by mining activities are restored to state reclamation standards.
  - **Output:** Annual number of coal and non-coal permits and modifications issued.
  - **Output:** Annual number of inspections conducted.
  - **Efficiency:** Percentage of mining facilities inspected.
  - **Output:** Annual number of reclaimed acres with final bond release.
  - **Output:** Annual number of reclaimed abandoned mine lands (AML) sites.
    - **Task (C.2.1.1):** Timely process mine permit applications and modifications.
    - **Task (C.2.1.2):** Timely and thoroughly conduct inspections for initial applications, annual inspections, bond release requests, and complaints.
    - **Task (C.2.1.3):** Timely process bond release applications.
    - **Task (C.2.1.4):** Identify and evaluate abandoned mine lands (AML).

**D. Water Quantity Goal: Maintain sustainable quantities of surface and ground water in Mississippi.**

The Office of Land and Water Resources (OLWR) is responsible for the management of water resources in Mississippi. Section 51-3-1 of the Mississippi Code requires that “...the water resources of the state be put to beneficial use to the fullest extent of which they are capable, that the waste or unreasonable use, or unreasonable method of use, of water be prevented, that conservation of such water be exercised...” To achieve this requirement, OLWR is pursuing a conjunctive water management approach that coordinates the use of groundwater and surface water resources of the state to satisfy desired water needs.

**D.1 Water Quantity Objective: Quantify the availability of groundwater and surface water resources throughout the state.**

**Outcome: Number of Annually Prioritized Water Resource Areas Adequately Characterized.**

- **Strategy (D.1.1).** Monitor and assess the availability of water associated with fresh water aquifers and major fresh water streams to determine the impact of water use in Mississippi.

- **Output:** Number of wells measured.
- **Output:** Number of stream flows recorded.
- **Output:** Number of annually prioritized water resource areas adequately characterized.
  - **Task (D.1.1.1):** Develop standardized monitoring plan for groundwater and surface water monitoring activities.
  - **Task (D.1.1.2):** Develop prioritized listings of areas of concern for groundwater and surface water monitoring activities with projected timelines.
  - **Task (D.1.1.3):** Perform monitoring activities; analyze data; produce outputs including maps, graphs, charts and reports.

## **D.2 Water Quantity Objective: Manage water withdrawals to provide for beneficial use demands statewide.**

**Outcome: Number of Water Withdrawal Permits Analyzed, Processed, or Verified.**

- **Strategy (D.2.1).** Process, issue and modify water withdrawal permits to manage and conserve groundwater and surface water in Mississippi.
  - **Output:** Number of groundwater permits processed and modified.
  - **Efficiency:** Percent of groundwater permits processed within twelve months of receipt.
  - **Output:** Number of surface water permits processed and modified.
  - **Efficiency:** Percent of surface water permits processed within twelve months of receipt.

MDEQ issues water withdrawal permits for all water wells constructed with a surface casing of six inches in diameter or greater. All surface water withdrawals/diversions are permitted. Permit limits, special terms and conditions, construction criteria, operational requirements and reporting are reviewed for management decisions related to water use.

- **Task (D.2.1.1):** Issue and modify water withdrawal permits to ensure protection of water resources for highest beneficial uses, influenced entities, and resource management.
- **Task (D.2.1.2):** Perform annual water use survey to collect and analyze water pumpage data to ensure compliance and reporting standards.
- **Task (D.2.1.3):** Work to further develop and integrate groundwater and surface water modeling capabilities.
- **Task (D.2.1.4):** Conduct field inspections to determine compliance of permit terms and conditions.

### **D.3 Water Quantity Objective: Increase the efficiency of water use to improve sustainability of groundwater and surface water in Mississippi.**

**Outcome: Number of Water Conservation Practices Implemented.**

- **Strategy (D.3.1).** Promote and require implementation of water conservation actions as needed to maintain quantities of groundwater and surface water in Mississippi.
- **Output:** Number of water conservation measures implemented for permitted agricultural water wells.
- **Efficiency:** Percentage of water withdrawal permits with water conservation measures implemented.

MDEQ is working to develop and refine a suite of conservation practices to promote improved water balances while increasing public awareness of Mississippi’s aquifers, rivers and streams that are under stress.

- **Task (D.3.1.1):** Develop and refine suite of acceptable agricultural water efficiency practices necessary to improving Mississippi’s water balance.
- **Task (D.3.1.2):** Use of conjunctive water management strategies to limit stress where possible on single sources.
- **Task (D.3.1.3):** Continue to increase metered water wells statewide through permit actions and promotion of the Voluntary Metering Program in the Mississippi Delta to sustain 10 percent installation and reporting of metered agricultural wells.
- **Task (D.3.1.4):** Use education and outreach opportunities to engage the public and regulated community on the need to conserve waters of the state through conferences, reports, and education activities.

### **E. Water Quality Goal: Protect and restore surface and groundwater quality in Mississippi.**

MDEQ uses a Basin Management Approach through its Nonpoint Source and Water Quality Programs to protect and restore the quality of Mississippi surface water resources. The Basin Management Approach is a collaborative process involving stakeholder groups who provide input on how MDEQ formulates its water quality strategy. These stakeholders include agencies, organizations, businesses, and citizens who help MDEQ develop Watershed Based Management Plans. The figure below illustrates the planning and implementation process for achieving good water quality in streams and other water bodies across the state. MDEQ evaluates activities and drinking water sources to ensure protection of these resources.

Additionally, MDEQ has multiple programs that focus on all facets of water quality. Through these program areas, work is done to improve impaired waters through the development of water quality improvement plans (known as total maximum daily loads [TMDLs]). Other program activities involve establishing monitoring priorities, developing water quality standards and beneficial uses, providing grants, education and outreach to the public, and collecting water quality data and information in the streams, rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and estuaries in the state.

MDEQ has been delegated authority under Section 402 of the federal Clean Water Act to issue National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) wastewater discharge permits. These permits ensure the protection of surface waters of the State of Mississippi by placing limits on the amount of pollutants that are discharged. In some instances, MDEQ issues general permit coverages for specific categories of industrial activity, such as industrial stormwater. MDEQ has also been delegated authority under Section 401 of the federal Clean Water Act to issue water quality certifications for other agency permits. These certifications include provisions that must be met to ensure water quality protection related to wetlands and streams. These water quality certifications are required for projects involving dredge and fill activities covered under the Clean Water Act Section 404. To meet the goal of protecting and improving the quality of surface and ground water in Mississippi, MDEQ has the following objectives.

### **E.1 Water Quality Objective: Maintain Compliance with Federal Water Quality Standards and Requirements.**

**Outcome: Percentage of Waters that have acceptable quality for their designated water use (%).**

- **Strategy (E.1.1).** Monitor and assess water quality conditions to determine compliance with standards and complete reviews, research, guidance, monitoring, and plans for improving and maintaining surface water and groundwater quality.

In cooperation with other state and federal agencies, MDEQ conducts monitoring for surface water and ground water trends, reconnaissance, special projects, and priority areas to assess conditions, prepare reports, and update standards. Surface water monitoring is a core MDEQ responsibility and key to understanding water quality conditions in the state. MDEQ also completes several types of statewide and local water quality plans designed to improve and protect water quality.

- **Output:** Number of final TMDLs completed.
- **Output:** Number of Waste Load Allocations completed.
- **Output:** Number of Mississippi Clean Water Act Section 305(b) assessments completed.
- **Output:** Number of water samples taken for agricultural chemical monitoring program.

- **Task (E.1.1.1):** Work with other state and federal partners to update the NPS Management Plan to protect water quality from the impacts of nonpoint source activities.
  - **Task (E.1.1.2):** Establish and update water quality standards and criteria.
  - **Task (E.1.1.3):** Develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and Waste-Load Allocations.
  - **Task (E.1.1.4):** Develop a list of priority watersheds for protection and restoration within each basin.
  - **Task (E.1.1.5):** Develop comprehensive Watershed Based Plans under the Watershed Management Approach.
  - **Task (E.1.1.6):** Conduct appropriate follow-up monitoring when chemicals are detected at levels of concern through the Mississippi Agricultural Chemical Ground Water Quality Monitoring Program, MDEQ Field Services Division monitoring, or other monitoring programs.
  - **Task (E.1.1.7):** Collect and evaluate information from contractors and sub-grantees in implementing nonpoint source projects to determine progress in reducing water quality impacts from agriculture, forest practices, mining, urban development, and other activities.
  - **Task (E.1.1.8):** Collect surface water quality data (biological, chemical, and physical) as part of TMDL assessments or specific surface water quality investigations to determine compliance with state surface water quality standards.
  - **Task (E.1.1.9):** Collect groundwater samples statewide from multiple aquifers to help determine if agricultural use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers are migrating or having a negative impact on the drinking water aquifers of the state through the OLWR AgChem Program.
- **Strategy (E.1.2).** Issue, reissue, and modify water pollution control permits and coverages to ensure water quality standards are met in Mississippi.

MDEQ issues water discharge permits that can be facility-specific or for categories of industrial activities. Facility-specific permits are issued to control the discharges of pollutants into the environment from the construction, modification, and operation of water pollution sources. Permit limits, monitoring and recordkeeping requirements, and operational requirements are specified in these permits to ensure discharges will not cause or contribute to violations of water quality standards or impair any beneficial uses of waters of the state. In some instances, MDEQ issues general permits and coverages for specific categories of industrial activity, such as industrial stormwater discharges. Also, MDEQ issues water quality certifications for other agency permits. These certifications include provisions that must be met to ensure water quality protection related to wetlands and streams. These water quality certifications are required for projects involving dredge and fill activities covered under the Clean Water Act Section 404.

- **Output:** Number of NPDES Permits issued/modified.
- **Efficiency:** Percentage of NPDES Permits issued/modified in a timely manner.

- **Output:** Number of coverages issued under NPDES General Permits.
  - **Task (E.1.2.1):** Issue NPDES permits and coverages that are protective of water quality in a manner consistent with state and federal regulations.
  - **Task (E.1.2.2):** Issue water quality certifications and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredge and fill permits (Clean Water Act Section 404).
- **Strategy (E.1.3).** Ensure water pollution sources are in compliance with permit conditions and regulatory requirements.

Once permits are issued, it is important to ensure facilities comply with their requirements. MDEQ conducts several types of compliance assurance activities to ensure regulatory requirements and permit conditions are met. Routine on-site compliance inspections, sampling/monitoring, technical reviews and citizen complaint investigations are all performed to promote compliance with applicable requirements.

- **Efficiency:** Percentage of NPDES Majors inspected.
- **Efficiency:** Percentage of Inspected NPDES Majors in compliance with regulatory requirements.
  - **Task (E.1.3.1):** Provide outreach and technical assistance to help facilities comply with permits and regulatory requirements.
  - **Task (E.1.3.2):** Inspect facilities with NPDES permits and review monthly discharge monitoring reports to determine compliance with permit requirements.
  - **Task (E.1.3.3):** Take enforcement actions in a consistent and timely manner to return facilities to compliance and deter future noncompliance.
- **Strategy (E.1.4).** Ensure the protection of drinking water resources.

Protecting sources of drinking water is essential for maintaining and improving the quality of human health and the environment. Source water assessments characterize the susceptibility of a drinking water source to contamination by summarizing information about the activities and land uses within recharge areas. Potential sources of contamination are identified for each individual city or town in each water supply protection area to use as support for planning decisions. Information gathering in the assessment process is incorporated into recommendations for actions that can be taken at the local level to protect drinking water sources.

The assessments help to focus protection efforts to minimize risks of individuals drinking contaminated water. These efforts may include developing source water protection plans, encouraging the use of Best Management Practices, establishing local protection teams, and using other source protection measures.

- **Output:** Number of local governments that incorporate source water assessment and protection information into community planning to protect drinking water sources.

- **Task (E.1.4.1):** Provide technical and regulatory assistance to local governments to help them protect surface and ground water quality in accordance with their statutory responsibilities.
- **Task (E.1.4.2):** Provide federal grant funding and technical oversight for projects that reduce nonpoint source pollutants.
- **Task (E.1.4.3):** Maintain source water assessment reports to the public through web-based applications.
- **Task (E.1.4.4):** Complete source water assessments on new drinking water sources and update existing sources with new information. Assist communities in using the information to develop and implement drinking water source protection strategies.

**E.2 Water Quality Objective: Ensure the improvements funded through the Water Pollution Control (Clean Water) Revolving Loan Fund Program (“SRF”) are adequate to meet the needs of citizens, the business community, and to foster economic growth.**

**Outcome: Percentage of Available Money Obligated**

- **Strategy (E.2.1).** Provide assistance to public wastewater systems for facility improvements and source water protection.

MDEQ reviews engineering plans and specifications for wastewater facility designs. MDEQ provides financial assistance to communities through the Water Pollution Control (Clean Water) Revolving Loan Fund Program (“SRF”) for water pollution control projects, particularly wastewater projects. Long term goals include: 1) maintaining a financially sound SRF in perpetuity; 2) meeting a substantial portion of the wastewater needs in the state within a reasonable period of time; and 3) funding fiscally sound projects in order of environmental importance as established by the Commission, while continuing to maintain a program that is attractive to the communities in the state.

- **Efficiency:** Percentage of SRF Loan recipients in compliance with loan agreements.
  - **Task (E.2.1):** Complete reviews of wastewater engineering plans and specifications to ensure designs meet rule requirements, protect public health, and protect surface and ground waters from contamination.
  - **Task (E.2.2):** Provide SRF loan assistance to eligible communities to design and construct wastewater treatment systems that protect public health and reduce water pollution.

## **F. Emergency Preparedness and Response Goal: Prevent, prepare for, and respond to public health, safety, and environmental emergencies.**

MDEQ maintains the resources and readiness to quickly and effectively support local emergency response personnel and communities when an environmental or public health emergency occurs. This readiness is accomplished by training alongside regional response teams, state agencies such as the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), the Mississippi Department of Health (MDOH), Mississippi Department of Public Safety (MDPS), and federal agencies such as EPA, Department of Defense (DOD), Homeland Security, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Additionally, MDEQ maintains expertise in handling hazardous, radioactive materials and biohazard emergencies by participating in advanced-level courses and exercises. In addition, MDEQ strives to prevent dam incidents and failures through a proactive system of inspections and assessments that attempt to identify and address deficiencies in dam design and construction. The department also requires that High Hazard dams have an emergency action plan in place to better protect the downstream public should a dam failure occur. To meet the emergency preparedness and response goal, MDEQ has the following objectives.

**F.1 Emergency Objective: Maintain staff that is adequately trained and equipped to conduct an environmental emergency response.**

**Outcome: Percentage of Staff with Expertise in the National Incident Management System.**

- **Strategy (F.1.1).** Provide training and technical expertise for emergency planning and preparedness.

MDEQ works with MEMA, local law enforcement, the State Fire Academy, and other partners to provide training and expertise to local responders, communities, and industry.

- **Output:** Number of Staff with expertise in the National Incident Management System and ready for an emergency.
  - **Task (F.1.1.1):** Maintain rotational staff that is “on-call” to respond anywhere in the state to emergency events such as train wrecks, truck wrecks, chemical fires, and terrorism events.
  - **Task (F.1.1.2):** MDEQ will participate in emergency preparedness meetings and emergency exercises and drills conducted by regional and local entities.



- **Task (F.1.1.3):** Provide specific training and technical support to cities, counties, hospitals, tribes, and other state agencies in responding to hazardous and radiological emergencies, natural disasters, and terrorist acts.
  - **Task (F.1.1.4):** Maintain expertise with the National Incident Management System and Incident Command System by participating in exercises and advanced training.
  - **Task (F.1.1.5):** Review the agency’s Emergency Response Plan annually to ensure necessary resources and expertise can be deployed effectively and efficiently in the event of an emergency or natural disaster.
- **Strategy (F.1.2).** Respond to public health, safety, and environmental emergencies.

MDEQ is one of many agencies that participate in the State Emergency Management Program operated under the leadership of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). When an emergency occurs, MDEQ coordinates with various state agencies through MEMA for both planning and coordinating incident responses. MDEQ provides on-scene personnel support to assess environmental and human health risks, suggest approaches for minimizing impacts, coordinate environmental investigations, and characterize and oversee cleanup.

In the event of a state or federally declared disaster, MDEQ provides personnel to work in the State Emergency Operations Center at MEMA headquarters, in support offices, or both. In the event of an environmental response emergency, MDEQ, working with local responders and contractors, may implement a series of increasingly stringent pollution control measures while keeping the public informed of efforts that are underway to safeguard health.

- **Output:** Dollars expended for emergency cleanups.
  - **Task (F.1.2.1):** Provide technical advice to on-scene incident commanders for responding to chemical and dam safety emergencies.
  - **Task (F.1.2.2):** Provide or help identify resources needed for emergency response actions.
  - **Task (F.1.2.3):** Provide pertinent emergency information to the public.

**F.2 Emergency Objective:**      **Protect downstream lives and property by ensuring that dams are properly classified, inspected, and maintained and include a current Emergency Action Plan (EAP) as required.**

**Outcome:**                              **Percentage of High and Significant Hazard Dams in compliance with the Regulatory Requirements.**

- **Strategy (F.2.1).** Ensure dams are properly inspected and maintained.

MDEQ requires that dam owners perform annual inspections of their High and Significant Hazard dams and also have periodic inspections performed by a registered professional engineer. Dam owners are required to address any deficiencies noted during inspections resulting in applications for dam modifications/rehabilitation. MDEQ performs random inspections to verify that the conditions of the dams are being accurately reported in the submitted inspection reports.

- **Output:** Number of dams inspected.
- **Output:** Number of applications for dam modification/rehab.
  - **Task (F.2.1.1):** Each quarter MDEQ will send notices to pertinent dam owners requiring either an owner's or engineer's inspection be submitted.
  - **Task (F.2.1.2):** MDEQ will randomly inspect dams to ensure proper inspections and reporting.
  - **Task (F.2.1.3):** MDEQ will require dam owners to provide a schedule for addressing any deficiencies noted during dam inspections.
  - **Task (F.2.1.4):** MDEQ will perform compliance and enforcement as needed to help ensure objectives are met.
- **Strategy (F.2.2).** Review plans and specifications for the modification of existing dams or construction of new dams to ensure they are designed according to regulations.
  - **Output:** Number of dam applications received.
  - **Output:** Number of permits issued.
  - **Output:** Number of construction inspections performed.
    - **Task (F.2.2.1):** MDEQ will review plans and specifications for the construction of new dams to ensure they are designed in accordance with the regulations.
    - **Task (F.2.2.2):** After the review is complete, MDEQ will issue a permit.
    - **Task (F.2.2.3):** MDEQ will perform periodic construction inspections to ensure that dams are being built in accordance with the approved plans.
    - **Task (F.2.2.4):** MDEQ will perform compliance and enforcement as needed to ensure this objective is met.
- **Strategy (F.2.3).** Ensure High Hazard dams have an up to date Emergency Action Plan (EAP).

MDEQ will require that all High Hazard dam owners have an Emergency Action Plan for warning and evacuation in the event of a dam incident or failure.

- **Output:** Percentage of High Hazard Dams with an EAP.

- **Task (F.2.3.1):** MDEQ will require all High Hazard dam owners to develop an EAP for their dam that includes a breach analysis.
- **Task (F.2.3.2):** MDEQ will require that the EAP be transmitted to all local officials who are responsible for implementing the plan.
- **Task (F.2.3.3):** MDEQ will require the EAP be updated periodically to include any changes in downstream development, contact information, changes in roads, bridges and other infrastructure.
- **Task (F.2.3.4):** MDEQ will perform compliance and enforcement activities as needed to ensure objectives are met.

## **G. Environmental Outreach, Research, and Education Goal: Encourage and empower citizens, businesses, and communities to engage in behaviors to protect public health and preserve Mississippi's environment.**

Education and outreach are important for raising public awareness and promoting environmentally responsible behaviors. MDEQ is committed to integrating education and outreach into staff activities agency-wide within existing budgetary capabilities.

### **G.1 Outreach Objective: Maintain an adequate level of outreach so that citizens, businesses, and communities engage in behaviors that protect health and preserve Mississippi's environment.**

**Outcome:   Number of internet web site visits**

- **Strategy (G.1.1).** Provide public outreach, training, and/or certification to increase awareness and understanding of environmental and related health and safety issues and laws impacting Mississippi citizens, schools, businesses, and communities.

Environmental laws, rules, and programs can be complex and difficult to understand. MDEQ's public outreach efforts are aimed at helping citizens, schools, businesses, and communities learn about required and recommended actions to protect the environment and public health and encouraging them to make healthy, sustainable choices. In order to conduct certain environmentally related occupations, such as licensed water well drilling, asbestos abatement, wastewater operation, UST abatement, or brownfield redevelopment, individuals or firms must be trained and certified/licensed.

- **Output:** Number of Occupational Certifications issued.

- **Output:** Number of enHance memberships awarded.
- **Output:** Number of enHance membership applications received.
- **Efficiency:** Percentage of enHance memberships awarded.
  - **Task (G.1.1.1):** Integrate outreach, education, and compliance assistance into agency regulatory activities.
  - **Task (G.1.1.2):** Develop high-quality, accurate, and understandable publications, web content, displays, and other outreach materials designed to inform stakeholders about key environmental issues and agency initiatives.
  - **Task (G.1.1.3):** Provide timely public access to information on environmental issues and agency activities via the news media, MDEQ’s website, workshops, and events sponsored by MDEQ and stakeholders.
  - **Task (G.1.1.4):** Participate in community events to interact with citizens and share information on environmental issues, environmental justice issues, and best practices.
  - **Task (G.1.1.5):** Encourage businesses to adopt pollution prevention methods as part of their everyday operations through outreach such as the Economy, Energy, and the Environment (E3) sustainable manufacturing program.
  - **Task (G.1.1.6):** Provide technical and compliance assistance to regulated facilities and recognize environmental leadership in the regulated community through the enHance stewardship program.
  - **Task (G.1.1.7):** Establish and maintain occupational certification programs (i.e., UST Certification of Persons who install, alter, and remove underground storage tanks; asbestos removers; lead-based paint abatement; brownfield consulting firms; licensed water well drillers; wastewater treatment facility operators; and, commercial landfill operators) to ensure compliance with statutes and regulations that protect public health and the environment.
  - **Task (G.1.1.8):** Review asbestos abatement and lead-based paint certification applications and process a certificate for each individual who meets the qualification requirements of the regulations.
- **Strategy (G.1.2).** Expand the capabilities of Mississippi citizens to incorporate pollution prevention practices into the workplace and their daily lives.

Pollution Prevention (P2) is any activity—including the use of materials, processes, or practices—that reduces or eliminates the creation of pollutants or waste at the source. Instead of trying to manage the wastes or pollutants through treatment or disposal methods, P2 aims to prevent the initial generation or reduce the toxicity of wastes and pollutants such as hazardous waste, air pollutants, solid waste, and wastewater.

P2 also includes any activity that reduces the toxicity of materials purchased or reduces the consumption of resources such as raw materials, water, energy, or fuel. By employing P2 practices,

stakeholders can enhance productivity, save money, improve workplace safety, reduce liability, and conserve natural resources.

- **Output:** Number of Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Days.
- **Efficiency:** Percentage of citizens who have access to recycling programs.
  - **Task (G.1.2.1):** Plan, develop, and implement projects that provide stakeholders with effective tools to prevent pollution, minimize waste, and conserve energy and resources.
  - **Task (G.1.2.2):** Enhance environmental performance, pollution prevention, recycling and innovative programs through technical assistance, public education, and innovative programs implementation.
  - **Task (G.1.2.3):** Identify needs for P2 education and outreach based on real and known pollutant impacts on human and environmental health; the persistence, bioaccumulation, and toxicity of pollutants monitored in databases such as the Toxics Release Inventory, and the effectiveness of previously implemented outreach or technical assistance efforts.
- **Strategy (G.1.3).** Enhance access to and use of information to improve agency programs and to assist citizens, businesses, and communities with identifying opportunities to conserve and improve public health and the environment.

To effectively fulfill MDEQ's mission, the agency must consistently and effectively engage local communities and their stakeholders in the decision making processes. MDEQ must also empower communities by providing them access to environmental information used in decision making so that they may have the ability to provide meaningful involvement in these same decision making processes.

- **Output:** Number of Community Engagement events.
  - **Task (G.1.3.1):** Assist local governments and the public by maintaining and providing access to the public record of agency interests, regulations, guidance, and research publications.
  - **Task (G.1.3.2):** Engage with the community by supporting existing partnerships and by building new partnerships that provide opportunities for a better quality of life for present and future generations of Mississippians.
  - **Task (G.1.3.3):** Present information in ways that will enable community stakeholders to better understand environmental issues and participate in an informed way during the decision-making process.
  - **Task (G.1.3.4):** Produce outcomes that are responsive to stakeholder concerns and help meet community needs and long-term goals to the extent practicable.
  - **Task (G.1.3.5):** Assist small businesses in meeting the federal and state requirements (e.g., the Clean Air Act) by disseminating environmental technical information and

providing on-site, free, non-regulatory, confidential technical assistance about regulations, permitting, compliance, and pollution prevention.

- **Strategy (G.1.4).** Increase knowledge of Mississippi’s surface and subsurface geology, paleontology, and mineral resources through focused research.

Research into the surface and subsurface geology, paleontology, and mineral resources of Mississippi is applied directly to the benefit of the people and economy of the state through the publication and distribution of maps and reports to a wide range of users. Geology is the basis of the environment, and geologic maps are used for locating mineral resources and geologic hazards, aquifer recharge areas, and areas suitable for waste disposal facilities. MDEQ also compiles reports on oil and gas related geology and coastal geology. The results of the investigations and mapping are disseminated through publications, professional presentations, and online databases.

- **Output:** Number of 7.5-minute geologic quadrangles published annually.
- **Output:** Number of test holes drilled in support of MDEQ programs annually.
- **Output:** Number of wireline logs and total footage collected annually.
- **Output:** Number of publications issued annually.
- **Output:** Number of test hole sample sets catalogued annually.
  - **Task (G.1.4.1):** Prepare detailed surface geologic maps.
  - **Task (G.1.4.2):** Drill test holes to facilitate surface geologic mapping and assessment of groundwater aquifers.
  - **Task (G.1.4.3):** Collect wireline logs in test holes and water wells.
  - **Task (G.1.4.4):** Make geologic information available to any user through sales of maps and publications, free downloads, and professional presentations.
  - **Task (G.1.4.5):** Collect and maintain cores, drill samples, and mineral and paleontological samples in the Core and Sample Library.

- **Strategy (G.1.5).** Build the Mississippi Digital Earth Model (MDEM) and update Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRM) and the FEMA Risk Mapping, Assessment and Planning (Risk MAP) studies and products.

MDEQ collects data for the Mississippi Digital Earth Model (MDEM), supports the Mississippi Coordinating Council for Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems in its coordination of GIS activities in the state, and manages the development of new Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRM) and the FEMA Risk Mapping, Assessment and Planning (Risk MAP) Program.

- **Output:** Number of data sets developed annually for inclusion in the statewide collection of high resolution digital GIS data and the digital map of Mississippi comprised of the key framework data layers.

- **Output:** Number of basin studies with up to date digital flood insurance rate maps and flood risk assessment data completed annually.
  - **Task (G.1.5.1):** Develop and collect high resolution and highly accurate digital GIS data sets that comprise the key framework data layers for the digital map of the state (MDEM).
  - **Task (G.1.5.2):** Complete flood and Risk MAP studies on a HUC\_8 basin basis across the state, working in close coordination with FEMA, MEMA, other state and federal agencies, and local governments located in those basins.
  - **Task (G.1.5.3):** Make up-to-date digital flood insurance rate maps and flood risk assessment data available to state, federal, and local governments to support flood plain management, flood risk mitigation, and hazard planning activities across the state.

**H. Efficient and Effective Public Service Goal: To provide efficient and effective government services and be a good steward of the human, financial, and physical resources provided to the agency by the citizens of the state.**

MDEQ’s control environment is shaped by management’s philosophy, integrity and ethical values, its organizational structure, the assignment of authority and responsibility, commitment to competence, and human resource development. MDEQ has policies and procedures and control activities in place to address each of these areas. In order to achieve the agency’s objectives and goals, risks must be assessed continually, but especially when conditions change. MDEQ’s senior management assesses risk through management meetings and daily activities. During the assessment, management considers how risk factors affect the organization’s ability to meet operational, financial, and compliance goals. MDEQ’s internal controls are evaluated not only internally by the managers, senior management, and the Executive Director but also by external auditors and by an annual assessment of internal control conducted by MDEQ as prescribed by the Department of Finance and Administration. In connection with the annual internal control assessment, MDEQ maintains an internal control plan, documentation of activities conducted in connection with the risk assessment, internal control reviews, follow-up actions and corrective action plans.

**H.1 Efficiency/Effectiveness Objective: Maintain an adequate level of outreach so that citizens, businesses, and communities engage in behaviors that protect health and preserve Mississippi’s environment.**

**Outcome: Administration as a Percentage of Total Budget**

- **Strategy (H.1.1).** Provide continual oversight and review of human, financial, and physical resources to ensure accountability and program effectiveness.
  - **Efficiency:** Percentage of vacant positions filled during the current fiscal year.
  - **Efficiency:** Percentage of financial transactions processed accurately and timely by MDEQ.
  - **Efficiency:** Percentage of reduced fleet inventory in accordance with State Appropriation mandates.
    - **Task (H.1.1.1):** Provide the necessary administrative and management functions of (a) Accounting, (b) Payroll, (c) Purchasing, (d) Data Processing, (e) Motor Pool and Vehicle, (f) Maintenance, (g) Printing and Records, (h) Public Relations, (i) Human Resources, and (j) Legal support to achieve the goals and objectives of MDEQ.
    - **Task (H.1.1.2):** Recruit and maintain a quality workforce.
    - **Task (H.1.1.3):** Maintain internal controls and review annually.
- **Strategy (H.1.2).** Streamline business processes that strengthen alignment with agency goals and objectives.

MDEQ has Information Technology support staff that manages enterprise computer operations, network operations, and provides support to both internal and external stakeholders. All programs depend on, collaborate with and/or interact with the systems that are developed, maintained or supported internally. Additionally, the IT support staff plays a significant role administering the transfer of environmental data that is required for regulatory reporting and tracking for federal programs delegated to MDEQ by EPA.

- **Efficiency:** Percentage of network availability during work hours.
- **Efficiency:** Percentage of core application(s) available during work hours (BP2K, TEALS, Microsoft Office).
  - **Task (H.1.2.1):** Implement and maintain a CROMERR (Cross-Media Electronic Reporting Rule) compliant Regulatory Services Portal website for environmental data submissions by the regulated community.
  - **Task (H.1.2.2):** Implement EPA's NETDMR system for the submission of NPDES Discharge Monitoring Reports.
  - **Task (H.1.2.3):** Maintain and expand the information available to the public that is available on enSearch Online.
  - **Task (H.1.2.4):** Enhance the customer experience by monitoring overall web presence and providing access to needed information.
  - **Task (H.1.2.5):** Identify and address internal and external information technology opportunities or challenges.
  - **Task (H.1.2.6):** Implement and maintain security measures to protect data, computers, servers, network hardware, and software from intrusions and attacks.