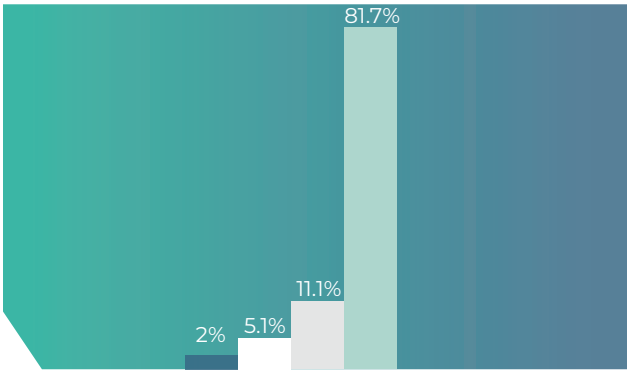
# ANNUAL REPORT 2025

**Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality**

The mission of the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality 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.

# Welcome to the MDEQ
# ANNUAL REPORT
## July 1, 2024- June 30, 2025

### STATE FISCAL YEAR 25 BUDGET




- **General:** $16,759,476
- **Federal:** $44,922,717
- **Special:** $88,759,854
- **Pass Through:** $552,223,252

**Total:** $702,665,299*

# Strategic Goals

- **Air Quality Goal:** Ensure that Mississippi air quality is protective of the health and welfare of its citizens.
- **Waste Management Goal:** Ensure the proper management of solid wastes and hazardous waste through waste reduction, recycling, and safe disposal practices to protect Mississippi's air, soil, and water resources.
- **Remediation Goal:** Protect human health and the environment through proper mitigation, remediation, reclamation, and restoration of natural resources.
- **Water Quantity Goal:** Maintain sustainable quantities of surface and ground water in Mississippi.
- **Water Quality Goal:** Protect and restore surface and groundwater quality in Mississippi.
- **Emergency Preparedness and Response Goal:** Prevent, prepare for, and respond to public health, safety, and environmental emergencies.
- **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 Dam Safety, etc.

**Pass through funds are those that are distributed as sub-awards to entities to implement local programs/projects such as MS Municipality & County Water Infrastructure (MCWI), State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF), Oil Spill Restoration, Non-Point Source, Dam Safety, etc.*

# from our Executive Director a **Message**

Dear Fellow Mississippians,

I am pleased to present the annual report of the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2025. As we reflect on another year of state service and environmental stewardship, this document is our record of how MDEQ continues to uphold its foundational mission: 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.

Our staff across air, land, water, and administrative programs has worked diligently to protect Mississippi's natural resources — often quietly, yet always with purpose. Behind every permit issued, water-quality test conducted, and compliance inspection carried out, there is great commitment and heart to the work we do.

I am pleased to share some of our notable accomplishments:

- Presented the 2024 Mississippi Restoration Summit virtually (p. 6)
- Handled 956 calls for emergency response assistance (p. 11)
- Continued to attain all National Ambient Air Quality Standards throughout the state (p. 12)
- Issued, modified, or renewed over 3, 557 permits. (p. 26)
- $3.3 Million awarded in solid waste assistance funds. (p. 28)
- Over $423 Million ARPA Grant Funds awarded. (p. 38)
- Published 11 geologic quadrangle maps from the Office of Geology (p. 47)

These successes reflect more than regulatory actions — they represent accomplishments for the betterment of our communities, businesses, and residents. They demonstrate how MDEQ's work helps ensure Mississippi's skies remain clear, our waters remain clean and plentiful, and our lands remain resilient. At the same time, we recognize that environmental stewardship is an ongoing responsibility.

As we move forward into the next fiscal year, MDEQ is committed to building on this foundation: streamlining and improving processes, gaining efficiencies through organizational and workload-management improvements, leveraging data for smarter decision-making, and responsibly taking advantage of artificial intelligence to enhance our operations.

Thank you for your continued trust and support. It is an honor to serve as steward of Mississippi's air, land, and water.

Sincerely,

Chris Wells
Executive Director,
Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality

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# Commission on Environmental Quality

The Commission on Environmental Quality is empowered to formulate department policy; enforce rules and regulations; receive funding; conduct studies for using the state's resources; and discharge duties, responsibilities, and powers as necessary.

Chairman
Patrick L. Johnson, Jr.

Vice Chairman
Chat Philips

Jack Winstead

W.J. (Billy) Van Devender

Brenda Lathan

John Dane III

Kent Parrish, Jr.

# Mississippi Environmental Quality Permit Board

The Mississippi Environmental Quality Permit Board takes action on permits administered through MDEQ. The Permit Board issues, reissues, modifies, denies, transfers, and revokes Mississippi permits and certifications administered under the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, state mining laws, and state water resource control laws.

Chairman
Doug Mann

Vice Chairman
Chris Hawkins

Les Herrington

David Dockery

Jennifer Wittmann

Chris McDonald

David Snodgrass

# Office of **Restoration**

**$23.1 Million**

in projects selected by Governor Reeves FY25

**14,000+**

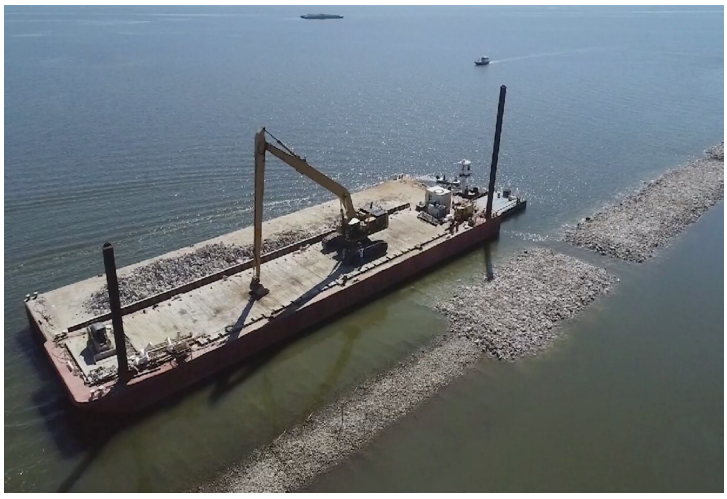
acres aquired of forested poperty in the headwaters of Wolf River for conservation and protection

Presented the 2024 Mississippi Restoration Summit virtually.

MDEQ leads Mississippi's restoration efforts following the 2010 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. Executive Director Chris Wells represents the state on key restoration bodies, including the Natural Resource Damage Assessment Trustee Council, the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund. Through these partnerships, Mississippi works with federal agencies and Gulf states to implement projects that restore and enhance natural resources across the region.

MDEQ's Office of Restoration manages all projects funded through NRDA, the RESTORE Act, and the NFWF Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund. The agency's team of scientists and engineers collaborates with federal and state partners, local governments, nonprofits, businesses, and residents to plan and deliver restoration initiatives.

Public engagement remains central to this work. Since 2013, more than ***1,500*** project ideas have been submitted through MDEQ's online project portal, reflecting a wide range of ecological, economic, and community priorities.



# Mississippi Restoration Funds

As a result of the oil spill and settlement of claims, MDEQ is managing approximately ***$1.45 billion*** of the ***$2.1 billion*** Mississippi will receive to support recovery and restoration efforts. These funds are allocated to the state from civil and criminal penalties levied against the responsible parties under the Clean Water Act and natural resource damages under the Oil Pollution Act. The restoration funds that MDEQ manages for implementing restoration projects come from three primary funding sources:

- RESTORE Act - $796 million to be paid by the responsible parties over time in accordance with the court-approved payment schedule through 2031.
- Direct Component (Bucket 1) - $372.9 million
- Comprehensive Plan Component (Bucket 2) – Under the RESTORE Act, approximately $1.59 billion will be administered with each member of the RESTORE Council eligible to receive funding in a competitive process. To date, $91.6 million has been allocated to Mississippi.
- Spill Impact Component (Bucket 3) - $304.8 million
- Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program (Bucket 5) - $28.9 million
- NFWF-GEBF - $356 million paid by the responsible parties to the GEBF
- Natural Resource Damage Assessment - $296 million

# The RESTORE Act

The RESTORE Act makes available ***80%*** of CWA civil penalties paid by the responsible parties for the oil spill (i.e. BP and Transocean) for programs, projects, and activities that restore and protect the environment and economy of the Gulf Coast through the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund. Within the RESTORE Act, there are five funding components, or “buckets,” which make funds available to each of the states in accordance with certain legal parameters:

- Direct Component (Bucket 1)
- Comprehensive Plan Component (Bucket 2)
- Spill Impact Component (Bucket 3)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Science Program (Bucket 4)
- Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program (Bucket 5)

The State of Mississippi is involved in the administration of funds from Buckets 1, 2, 3, and 5. MDEQ works with the U.S. Department of Treasury for Buckets 1 and 5 and the RESTORE Council for Buckets 2 and 3. NOAA administers Bucket 4.

The RESTORE Council, established by the RESTORE Act, develops and oversees implementation of a comprehensive plan to help restore the ecosystem and economy of the Gulf Coast region. The RESTORE Council is comprised of governors, or their respective designees, from the five affected Gulf of Mexico states, the secretaries from the U.S. Departments of the Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, and Homeland Security as well as the secretary of the Army and the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

## Governor's Gulf Coast Advisory Committee

The Governor's Gulf Coast Advisory Committee was established in 2021 to research and recommend projects to the governor under the RESTORE Act Direct Component and Spill Impact Component. For 2024, the committee recommended projects for consideration in Amendment 8 to the Multiyear Implementation Plan and State Expenditure Plan.

The committee's seven subcommittees' recommendations resulted in ***11*** new projects totaling ***$23.1 million*** selected and announced by Governor Reeves in November 2024. The addition of these projects to the projects selected by Governor Reeves brings the total to ***$227 million*** during this administration.*

*Direct Component (Bucket 1)*
In June 2025, the U.S. Department of the Treasury accepted Amendment Number 8 to Mississippi's Multiyear Implementation Plan. The MIP describes the projects, programs, and activities for which Mississippi will spend Bucket 1 funds. The MIP Amendment Number 8 included the following seven updates totaling approximately ***$17.8 million*** in new or additional project funding:

- Trent Lott International Airport Apron Expansion ($1.1 million in additional funding) – for expansion of existing aprons at Trent Lott International Airport.
- Mississippi Cyber and Technology Center ($6.6 million) – to construct a cyber and technology center to support workforce development in the cybersecurity field.
- Port of Pascagoula Infrastructure Improvements ($4 million) – to expand bulkhead and docking capacity at the Port of Pascagoula.
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- Bay St. Louis Downtown ADA Boardwalk ($1.1 million) – to construct an ADA compliant boardwalk to enhance visitor experience in downtown Bay St. Louis.
- Seaway Rail Truck Intermodal Transload Site Improvements ($2.75 million) – to construct a transloading site to accommodate new or expanding businesses.
- Planning Assistance – MIP Amendment Development ($600,000 in additional funding) - The proposed project modification includes an increase in funding for this project to support MDEQ in developing future MIP amendments and applications.

** There are 48 accepted projects on the MIP.*

Council Selected Component (Bucket 2)

In 2015, the RESTORE Council approved the first Funded Priorities List totaling approximately ***$156.6 million*** in restoration activities across the Gulf. In April 2021, the RESTORE Council approved FPL 3b. This allocated an additional ***$68.8 million*** to Mississippi projects. In August of 2021, the initial 2015 FPL was amended to authorize the transfer of a previously approved restoration project at Deer Island to MDEQ (***$3 million***). MDEQ is in the process of implementing the projects approved on the 2015 FPL and the 2021 FPL 3b.

Spill Impact Component (Bucket 3)

State Expenditure Plan

In April 2025, the RESTORE Council approved Mississippi's State Expenditure Plan Amendment that describes the project, programs, and activities for which the state will spend Bucket 3 funds. The SEP Amendment included ten updates totaling approximately ***$16 million***.

Centers of Excellence Component (Bucket 5)

The Mississippi-based RESTORE Act Center of Excellence was selected in 2015 as a partnership among Jackson State University, Mississippi State University, the University of Mississippi, and the University of Southern Mississippi, focusing on science, technology, and monitoring in the Gulf Coast region. In 2017, MDEQ executed a sub-award agreement with USM as the lead university for the MBRACE consortium. In the past year, MBRACE concluded research activities under its second Core Research

Program (Core 2), which is a continuation of the activities which occurred under Core 1. MBRACE also concluded research through projects that were competitively selected among researchers from all member universities. In April 2023, the initial MBRACE grant (MBRACE I) reached the end of its performance period. MBRACE I was formally closed in April 2024. During the closeout of MBRACE I, a subsequent MBRACE grant (MBRACE II) was applied for and received from the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

MBRACE II began on May 1, 2023. Since the start of MBRACE II, MBRACE's Executive Steering Committee has completed its selection process for MBRACE's next round of Core and Competitive research projects. Research through these projects is underway and continues to focus on areas of restoration interest such as oyster management and water quality in the Mississippi Sound.

Scan for more information on Restoration.

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Mississippi will benefit from ***$356 million*** because of the CWA criminal settlements resulting from the oil spill. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation administers these funds through the Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund for ***34*** projects in Mississippi with a total of approximately ***$211 million***.

In 2024, the Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund provided ***$13 Million*** towards the acquisition of ***6,117 acres*** of bottomland hardwood in the headwaters of the Wolf River, as part of a ***14,071-acre***, ***$27.2 million*** acquisition in coordination with USDA's Forest Legacy Program, the Nature Conservancy, Mississippi Forest Commission and Mississippi State University. This property will be managed and protected in perpetuity by Mississippi State University.

In early 2025, the Gulf Environmental Benefit fund also approved the use of funds for management activities on the Wolf River Acquisition. These funds will be used for mapping, chemical and mechanical treatment, removal of invasive species and planting of native species.

Natural Resource Damage Assessment

The Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment is the legal process for developing the public's claim for natural resource damages against the party or parties responsible for injuries to those resources and the services they provide. The NRDA settlement allocation for Mississippi is approximately ***$296 million***.

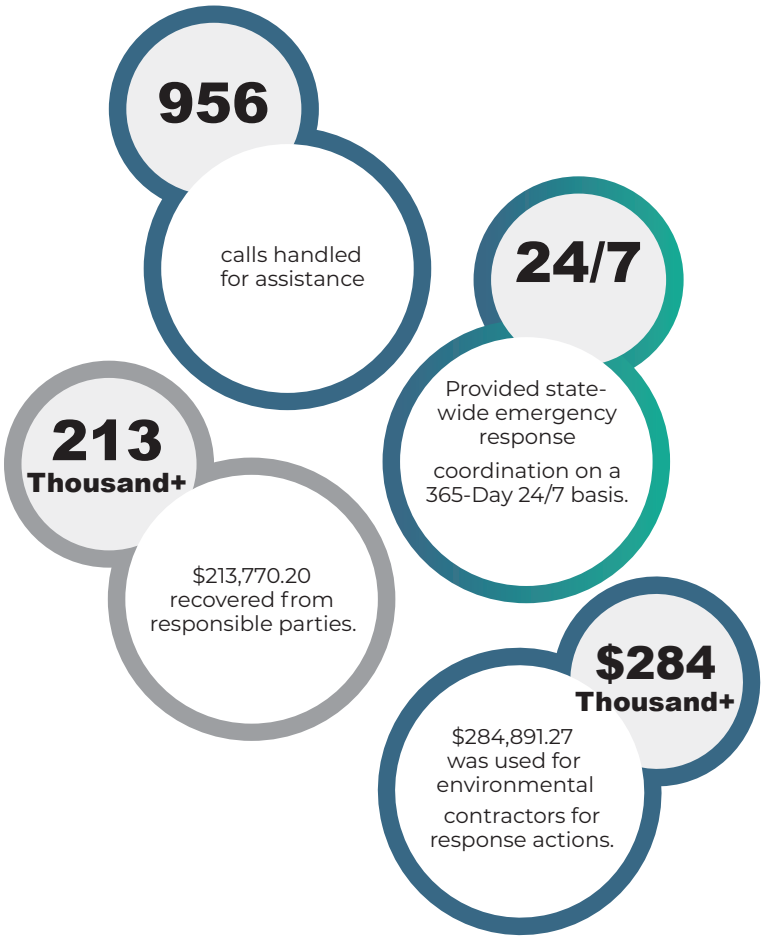
As part of the settlement with BP in 2016, the court approved a consent decree outlining the framework for the restoration of natural resource damages across the Gulf. The Deepwater Horizon Trustee Council completed the Final Programmatic Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan and Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement that includes an assessment of the injury to and the framework to restore injured natural resources. The NRDA settlement, including early restoration, totals ***$296 million*** for Mississippi projects for the following restoration types:

- Wetlands, Coastal, and Nearshore Habitats
- Habitat projects on Federally Managed Lands
- Nutrient Reduction (Nonpoint Source)
- Sea Turtles
- Marine Mammals
- Birds
- Oysters
- Provide and Enhance Recreational Opportunities
- Monitoring and Adaptive Management

The Mississippi Trustee Implementation Group is responsible for restoring the natural resources and services in Mississippi and is comprised of MDEQ, NOAA, DOI, USDA, and EPA. The MS TIG identifies restoration projects, develops draft and final restoration plans, and implements specific restoration actions that are consistent with the PDARP/PEIS. Proposed restoration projects and relevant restoration plans must be consistent with the Consent Decree, Oil Pollution Act, NRDA regulations, and Trustee Council governing documents. The Trustees ensure that the public is involved through public noticing of proposed restoration plans, public comment, and consideration of comments received.

# Office of
# Pollution Control

## Emergency Response and Preparedness




The Emergency Response Division responds to emergencies involving hazardous materials, oil spills, or any pollutant that poses a threat to human health or the environment.

MDEQ and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency work together to provide effective, around-the-clock spill responses. MEMA is notified of emergencies, and they contact MDEQ personnel to provide on-site response and technical assistance.

MDEQ maintains the resources and readiness to quickly and effectively support local communities and emergency response personnel should an environmental or public health emergency occur. This readiness is accomplished by training alongside regional response teams; state agencies such as MEMA, the Mississippi State Department of Health, the Mississippi Department of Public Safety; and federal agencies such as EPA, the Department of Defense, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Additionally, MDEQ maintains expertise in handling hazardous and radioactive materials and biohazard emergencies by participating in advanced-level courses and exercises.

# Air

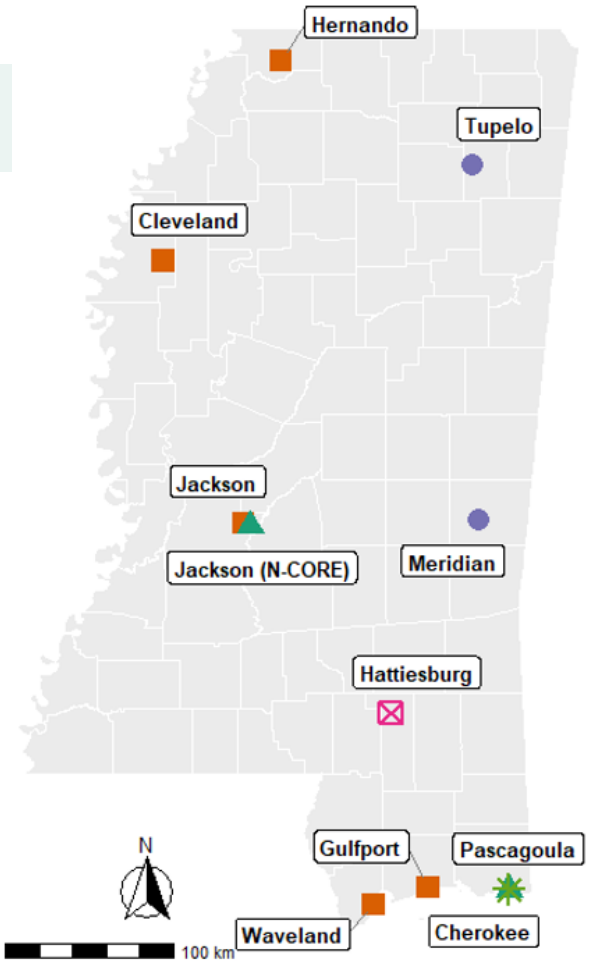
## Ambient Air Quality

To protect public health, the MDEQ Air Division operates a continuous, statewide air monitoring network. This network provides the data to ensure Mississippi meets the National Ambient Air Quality Standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for several key pollutants, including ozone, particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, carbon dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide.

Currently, Mississippi is in attainment and meets all federal air quality standards across the state.

**Mississippi Air Quality Monitoring Network**

Locations and primary designation of monitoring sites




Source: Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, Air Division.

## Proactive Planning for Cleaner Air

Federal air quality standards are periodically reviewed and strengthened. On May 6, 2024, the EPA finalized a more stringent annual standard for fine particulate matter (PM2.5), lowering it from ***12.0 to 9.0 µg/m³***. MDEQ is actively working to ensure the state continues to meet this new, more stringent standard.

For ozone, emissions reductions and proactive partnerships have led to a decade-long downward trend in concentrations, allowing Mississippi to meet the current federal standard. MDEQ continues to partner with local governments and businesses in DeSoto County and on the Gulf Coast to prevent future nonattainment of ozone standards.

## Informing the Public

To keep the public informed, MDEQ issues daily Air Quality Index forecasts for the Jackson metropolitan area, DeSoto County, and the Mississippi Gulf Coast. These forecasts use a simple, color-coded scale to communicate the daily air quality and any potential health considerations.

*For more detailed information on Mississippi's air quality programs, monitoring data, and standards, please visit the MDEQ Air Division website.* [https://www.mdeq.ms.gov/air/ambient-air-quality/](https://www.mdeq.ms.gov/air/ambient-air-quality/)

| Air Quality Index Levels of Health Concern | Numerical Value | Meaning |
|---|---|---|
| Good | 0 to 50 | Air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk |
| Moderate | 51 to 100 | Air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people who are unusually sensitive to air pollution. |
| Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups | 101 to 150 | Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is not likely to be affected. |
| Unhealthy | 151 to 200 | Everyone may begin to experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects. |
| Very Unhealthy | 201 to 300 | Health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected. |
| Hazardous | 301 to 500 | Health alert: everyone may experience more serious health effects |

## Diesel School Bus Replacement Program


Funded by the U.S. EPA through the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act State Grants Program, MDEQ provides rebates to school districts for the replacement of older diesel school buses with newer and cleaner ones. Since its inception in 2014, this program has awarded more than ***$2.9 million*** to ***69*** school districts, facilitating the replacement of approximately ***170*** school buses. More on this program (including announcements on future rebate opportunities) can be found at Diesel Emission Reduction Grant Program – MDEQ.

## Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust

As a result of the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust established in 2017 through a settlement between the U.S. Government and VW, Mississippi received ***$9.87 million*** from the overall **$2.7 billion** Trust. In 2023, after receiving numerous applications, MDEQ selected ***21*** projects for "Round 1" that best contributed to the goal of reducing nitrogen oxide tailpipe emissions and improving air quality. For these projects, MDEQ allocated up to ***$6,796,441*** in grant funding and, to

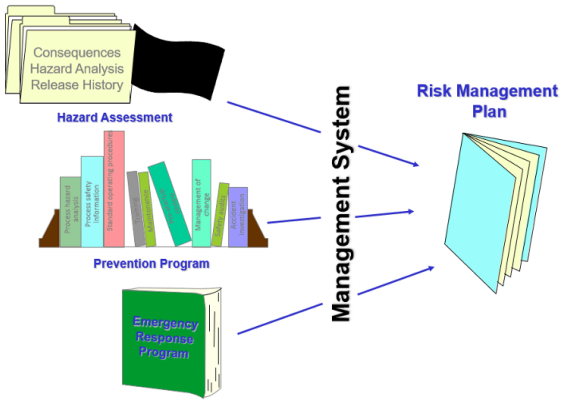
date, ***17*** of the ***21*** projects have been completed. More on this program (including announcements on the eventual "Round 2" funding opportunity) can be found at [MDEQ's Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Program.]

## Asbestos and Lead-Based Paint

State regulations require certain entities to inspect for the presence of asbestos-containing material and adequately remove such material before any demolition or renovation work can begin. In 2025, MDEQ's Asbestos Section certified ***1,530*** applicants for asbestos activities, inspected ***346*** demolition and renovation projects, investigated ***31*** complaints, and inspected ***13*** school districts regulated by the Federal Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act.

Similarly, State regulations require the abatement of lead-based paint during the renovation, repair, or painting of homes / buildings constructed before 1978. In 2025, MDEQ's Lead-Based Paint Section conducted outreach and education activities to over ***14,000*** citizens as well as providing compliance assistance to over ***2,400*** individuals. Additionally, in 2025, LBP staff performed ***21*** training course audits, conducted ***325*** site inspections (which include investigations of complaints), certified ***667*** individuals and firms involved in lead-based paint activities.

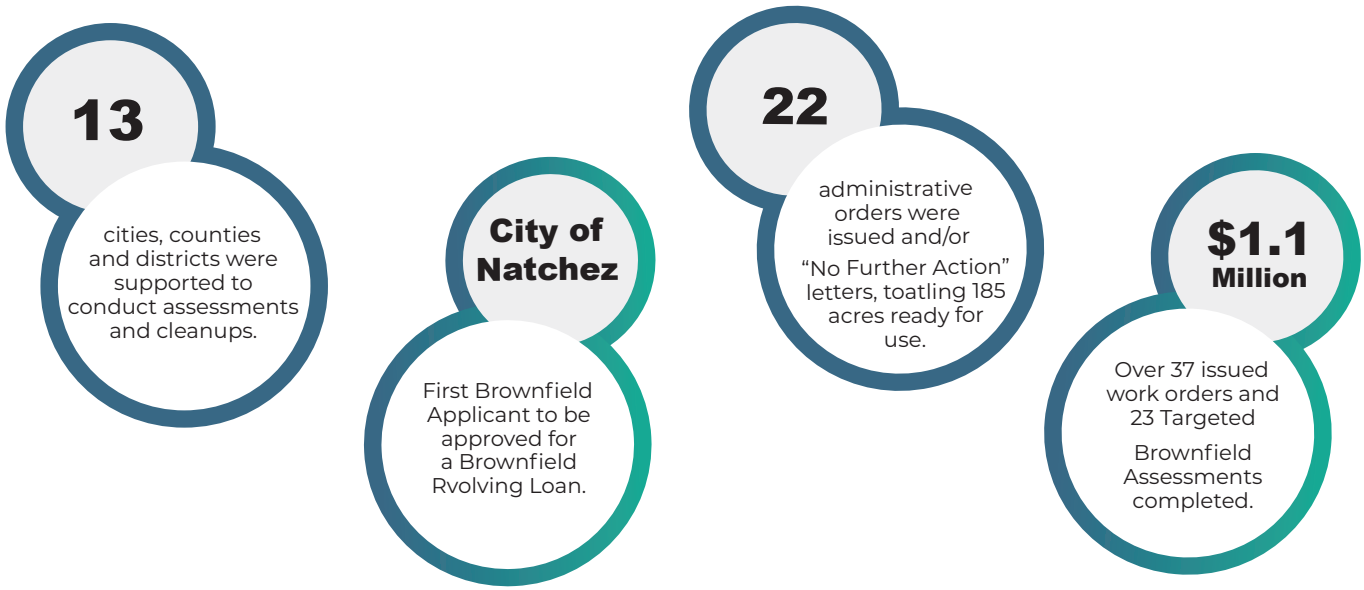
## Risk Management Plan




The RMP rule was built upon existing industry codes and standards for the purpose of protecting communities. It requires facilities that store listed toxic or flammable substances – ***180*** in total – at certain quantities develop to an RMP that outlines the prevention of accidental releases. As MDEQ has received the delegated authority to oversee the program for Mississippi, the Air Division is charged with routinely evaluating RMPs and conducting compliance inspections to assure regulated facilities are adequately preventing the accidental release of harmful substances. As such, during Fiscal Year 2025, Air Division staff completed ***36*** compliance inspections.

[Scan for more information on air resources.]

# Groundwater Assessment and Remediation




## Brownfields

A "brownfield" is a property which may be complicated by the presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant that affects the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of the property. MDEQ's Brownfield Program allows prospective purchasers and developers, along with existing companies, to assess, remediate, and revitalize these sites. Through the program, companies can coordinate with MDEQ and the Mississippi Development Authority to participate in a redevelopment incentive program to defray the remediation costs associated with cleaning up contaminated properties. To date, ***64*** companies have participated in the program, and **49** Brownfield Agreements have been executed putting **563.71 acres** back into reuse. This fiscal year, MDEQ provided technical support to the cities of Boonville, Canton, Columbia, Greenville, Hernando, Jackson, Louisville, Natchez, Ripley, Vicksburg, West Point, and Yazoo City along with Winston County and the North Central Planning and Development District, the Southern Mississippi PDD, the Central Mississippi PDD, and the Golden Triangle PDD to conduct assessments and cleanups for site redevelopment for locations that have potential or perceived environmental issues. These cities and development authorities received EPA grants to conduct brownfield revitalization projects.

Six communities submitted EPA Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act 104(k) grant applications in fiscal year 2025 and one was awarded. The City of Natchez was awarded a community-wide assessment grant. MDEQ received six new Brownfield applicants with two Brownfield Agreements issued for McIngvale Square in Hernando and the Tracetown Shopping Center in Natchez. .

In addition, ***one*** Brownfield Agreement was completed for the former Amoco Ethyl/Afton Chemical (Delta Biofuels) in Natchez.

MDEQ received and approved two applications for new Brownfield consulting firms, Hart & Hickman, P.C. and S&ME INC.

In 2025, MDEQ issued ***37*** work orders and completed ***23*** Targeted Brownfield Assessments. TBAs can consist of environmental assessment activities such as Phase I and Phase II, asbestos and lead based paint surveys, underground storage tank removal, and cleanup planning. These TBAs reduce costs and promote redevelopment opportunities for public and private entities as funding and eligibility allows. MDEQ has increased the number of TBAs it has conducted historically due to $1.5 Million in EPA CERCLA 104(k) assessment grant funding that has been awarded to MDEQ. In addition, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law appropriated additional CERCLA 128a Brownfield funding to states. MDEQ has been awarded ***$3.39 million*** in the first four of an expected five-year federal appropriation. MDEQ expects to continue to conduct TBAs each year through fiscal year 2027 and will reapply in fiscal year 2026 for a new 104(k) state-wide assessment grant.

MDEQ was also awarded by EPA one million in grant monies to establish a Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund Program in 2022. MDEQ established new Brownfield Regulations in October 2023 to implement this program. This funding is for the cleanup of contaminated sites for eligible Brownfield properties and public or private entities. MDEQ has approved a Brownfield Agreement and its first Brownfield Revolving Loan for the City of Natchez and the Fry Building site. Asbestos containing materials will be abated from the Fry Building prior to demolition and a paved parking lot will be constructed to act as an engineered cap over soils that contained polyaromatic hydrocarbons. The parking lot will serve the soon to be renovated, historic EOLA Hotel.

In federal fiscal year 2025, MDEQ hosted a Brownfield Workshop with the Mississippi Municipal League and EPA Region 4 at the Mississippi Coast Coliseum and Convention Center in Biloxi during the annual MML Conference. The workshop provided communities in Mississippi information on the Brownfield grant process, information on the State of Mississippi's Brownfield programs, and opportunities for communities that have been unsuccessful in receiving an EPA Brownfield Grant in the past to receive feedback on their grant proposals from technical grant writers frequently successful in securing Brownfield grants.

MDEQ encourages members of the Legislature to speak with their communities, counties, cities, planning districts, and developers on the value of the Brownfield programs that MDEQ and EPA offer. This significant increase in Brownfield funding and assistance will only be available through 2027. MDEQ is available to help educate your communities on Brownfield opportunities and our programs, so please contact us as you need assistance.

## Uncontrolled Sites and Voluntary Evaluation Program

During fiscal year 2025, Groundwater Assessment Remediation Division (GARD) staff actively oversaw 233 active sites with the total number of sites now at ***2,280***. These ***2,280*** sites cover all the known and suspected contaminated sites reported to the state since 1967. MDEQ issued "No Further Action" letters for 17 of these sites that were evaluated and remediated to levels protective of human health and the environment resulting in an additional ***214 acres*** ready for reuse.

During fiscal year 2025, MDEQ provided responses to ***50*** hazardous site determination requests from local governments and/or development districts to foster economic development and redevelopment and to assist with compliance with National Environmental Policy Act.

The Voluntary Evaluation Program offers an opportunity to receive an expedited review of site characterization and remediation plans and reports for parties that are voluntarily cleaning up uncontrolled sites that they have an interest in. The VEP is funded entirely by these participants who pay for MDEQ's oversight costs. To date, ***465 sites*** have participated in the VEP program, approximately ***20%*** of GARD's total number of sites.

## Superfund and Federal Facilities Cleanup and Redevelopment

Oversight of the assessment and remediation process at seven federal superfund sites, seven Department of Defense Facilities, a NASA Facility (Stennis Space Center), and several formerly used Defense Sites continue to be a large portion of the work involving the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act branch of MDEQ. This oversight work is funded through agreements with EPA, the Department of Defense, and NASA. Through these agreements, CERCLA staff perform preliminary assessments, site investigations, and site inspections at hazardous waste sites for National Priority List consideration, coordinate with EPA on emergency/removal projects, and assist EPA with the oversight of the remediation of nine superfund sites.

The Mississippi Phosphates site completed its removal action to grade and cap the East Gypsum Stack in 2024. The East Gypsum Stack is now closed via an engineered geosynthetic cover. EPA has shifted to closing out the remaining ponds and water return ditch alongside the East Gypsum Stack. Closure of the water return ditch is expected to be completed by November 2025. Water treatment and the closure of the East Gypsum Stack and other ponds have exceeded ***$200 million*** through EPA's Removal Action. EPA Removal Actions do not require a cost share from the State. However, Mississippi will incur a ***10%*** cost share on any future "remedial" actions, and eventually will incur operations and maintenance costs on any completed remedies.

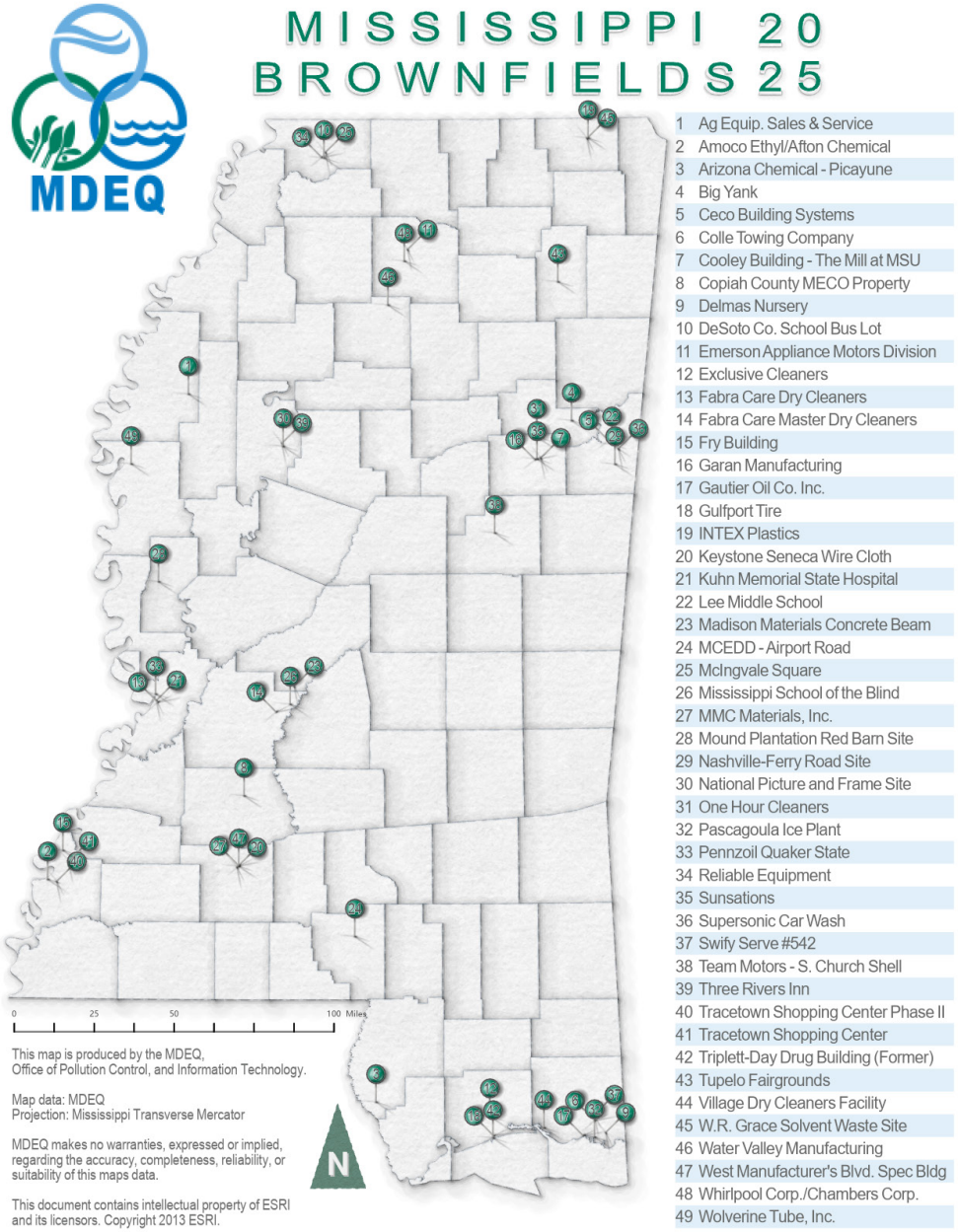
MDEQ manages the state's Underground Storage Tank program, which prevents and detects leaks of petroleum products and hazardous substances and protects groundwater from leaking tanks. The UST program registers all USTs in the state, conducts operator training, certifies contractors, and conducts inspections and compliance assistance at petroleum storage facilities. The program is also responsible for the assessment and remediation of UST facilities and the management of the Mississippi Groundwater Protection Trust Fund if a confirmed release of petroleum product is identified at a facility. The compliance program inspects UST facilities and is responsible for ensuring ***7,977*** tanks at 2,979 facilities have the appropriately maintained equipment. In fiscal year 2024, there were ***1,144*** inspections conducted.

A UST-certified contractor program ensures proper installation and maintenance of UST systems. This past year ***36*** new UST certified contractor licenses and 315 renewal licenses were issued. There are currently ***370*** certified individuals that perform tank installations, alterations, testing, and/or permanent closures. There are currently ***387*** Leaking Underground Storage Tank sites.

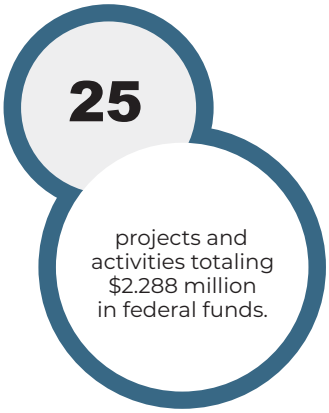
In the event of a release, the Trust Fund is used by MDEQ to assess and clean up contamination resulting from leaking USTs with no additional costs for eligible tank owners and operators. The fund began in 1987, and in June 2024 it reached an overall payout of ***$242.6 million*** to reimburse eligible tank owners for the assessment and cleanup of sites contaminated from leaking USTs. At the end of this fiscal year, MDEQ was working on ***564 sites*** that have had a confirmed or non-confirmed release and Trust Fund eligibility may or may not have been determined. During fiscal year 2024, ***$8.9 million*** was used to assess and remediate leaking underground storage tanks, a decrease of ***1%*** of spending.

Revenue to operate the UST program is derived from federal grants and annual active tank fees imposed on tank owners. In 2018, an UST Advisory Council was created to provide an independent review of the MDEQ UST program funding needs to determine the recommended amount for the fiscal year annual tank fee. In 2022, the UST Advisory Board recommended a potential law change to allow the Trust Fund to be used to help fund the UST program in lieu of continuing to raise the annual tank fee since the Trust Fund has remained sound since 1987. This law change passed in the 2022 Mississippi Legislative Session and was signed into law by the governor in April 2022.

Scan for more information on water resources.



# Surface Water




## Water Quality Monitoring

The MDEQ Water Quality Assessment Branch assesses the quality of surface water throughout the state using collected data compared to the state's water quality standards with determinations made about the health and safety of Mississippi's surface waters.

The results of the determinations can be found in the state's biennial CWA Section 305(b) Water Quality Assessment report. Waterbodies not meeting their water quality standards are placed on the state's Clean Water Section 303(d) List of Impaired Water Bodies for action. Data collected through the water quality program is publicly available on request or through EPA's Water Quality Portal.

## The State of Mississippi Water Quality Assessment
### 2024 Biennial 305(b) Report

Every two years, MDEQ is responsible for generating the Water Quality Assessment Report under Section 305(b) of the CWA. The report comprehensively describes for EPA, Congress, and the public the status of the quality of the state's surface waters. The report also describes the state's assessment methodology and gives the causes, where known, for waters identified as impaired. The 305(b) report is an overview of how the waters are assessed and what the overall results of these assessments are. The 2024 305(b) report is based on data collected from January 2018 through December 2022. The report also discusses public health concerns such as fish tissue advisories and beach advisories. At the end of the report is an appendix that lists each site assessed between 2018 to 2022 and whether it is attaining or not attaining its designated use or uses. The report can be found at www.mdeq.ms.gov/water-quality-assessment/.

## Triennial Review of Water Quality Standards

The Clean Water Act (CWA) requires that each state review their water quality standards at least every three years in a process called the triennial review. WQS must include three components: the designated uses of the state's waterbodies, the water quality criteria necessary to protect those uses, and antidegradation provisions to protect water quality. During the triennial review, the latest science and information available are considered, and when needed, criteria are updated to protect human health and aquatic life.

The last modifications to Mississippi's WQS were approved by EPA Region IV on December 17,

2021. The next triennial review is currently in progress. MDEQ WQS staff are currently reviewing the latest scientific information and evaluating the need for revisions to the current WQS. Once this review and evaluation is complete, MDEQ will finalize the proposed revisions to Mississippi's WQS. As part of the triennial review process, these draft revisions will undergo a 45-day public notice and a public hearing in order to receive public comments regarding the proposed revisions. MDEQ anticipates that this public notice and public hearing will be completed in late 2025 or early 2026. MDEQ will then review and respond to any comments received regarding the proposed revisions and will make any revisions needed to the proposed revisions based on these comments. The revised WQS will then continue through the rulemaking process. To complete the rulemaking revision, the proposed revisions to WQS must first be adopted by the Commission and then approved by EPA Region IV. This rulemaking process should be completed by midyear 2026.

## Total Maximum Daily Load and Modeling

Section 303(d) of the CWA requires states to identify all water bodies that do not meet state water quality standards and publish these in the 303(d) List of Impaired Waters biennially. This list was updated in 2024 and approved by the Mississippi Commission on Environmental Quality in April 2024. Waters that have been identified as biologically impaired using the Mississippi Benthic Index of Stream Quality will also have a Stressor Identification performed to determine the pollutant of concern. In 2024 MDEQ has done Stressor Identification work for seven waterbodies. The CWA requires states to calculate how much of a pollutant can be put in these waters without violating the standard. That quantity is reported as a Total Maximum Daily Load and addressed through a TMDL report. TMDLs include pollutant levels from point and nonpoint sources. They may set limits on pollutants entering water bodies or serve as planning tools for improving water quality. MDEQ develops TMDLs so that impaired water bodies will meet and continue to meet state water quality standards. TMDLs are currently being developed for five waterbodies. Mississippi has also identified eight water bodies were Advanced Restoration Plans have been put in place as an alternative to TMDL development.

## Development of the Priority Framework

In 2024, The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality developed an update to the 2015 collaborative framework for implementing the Clean Water Act as required by EPA. The updated framework is designed to help coordinate and focus various efforts to advance the effectiveness of the water program. Given resource constraints and competing program priorities, leveraging resources and coordinating efforts is crucial. This updated framework does not change regulations, policies, or issue new mandates. It is intended to provide focus for MDEQ water programs to better manage the activities and promote collaboration to achieve water quality goals for the streams, rivers, lakes, and estuaries of Mississippi. Some of the watersheds that have been prioritized through this process include waterbodies that are impaired and a subset of these will be targeted for development of TMDLs.

To select the priority watersheds, MDEQ used landscape information to calculate metrics on

the watershed scale that are used to characterize and rank watersheds by resource value and potential stressors. Resource value was determined using environmental and human welfare data layers. Environmental Factors considered included erosion potential, impervious area, wetlands, impaired waters, and concentration and types of discharge permits. Human Welfare Factors included demographics, fishing advisories, water supply intakes, public water supplies, recreational water bodies, public waterways, national and state parks, and recreational locations. Other factors considered were the presence of existing watershed plans, ongoing restoration and/or conservation work, and engaged stakeholders, all of which greatly increase the chances of success.

Weights for each of these were adjusted based on professional judgment of the importance of each for characterizing watershed value. Once these factors were developed, standardized, and weighted, the tool produced a relative ranking of every watershed within the state. One hundred watersheds were ranked using the Priority Framework Model to screen watersheds for activities that will address the water program goals.

To continue development of priority framework and better address human welfare/ environmental justice concerns; MDEQ has implemented the Supplemental Demographic Index. The SDI better captures the state's environmental justice factors based on five socioeconomic indicators; low income, unemployment, limited English speaking, less than high school education, and low life expectancy. Watersheds containing 303d listed impaired waterbodies were also weighted with greater priority than in previous frameworks.

MDEQ will review the selection process and screening criteria annually to identify the priority watersheds for the following ten-year period. Flexibility will be retained to amend watershed selection in the face of changing state priorities as well as changing EPA national and regional priorities.

Mississippi Priority Watershed Map 

2015 Priority Framework Process and Watershed Selection 

## Mississippi River and Gulf of America Watershed Nutrient Task Force

MDEQ continues to support the efforts of the Mississippi River/Gulf of America Watershed Nutrient Task Force to understand the causes and effects of increased nutrients in the Gulf of America and coordinate activities to reduce the size, severity, and duration and mitigate the effects of hypoxia. Activities of the task force include coordinating and supporting nutrient management activities from all sources, restoring habitats to trap and assimilate nutrients, and supporting other hypoxia-related activities in the Mississippi River and Gulf of America watersheds. In support of nutrient reduction efforts, Mississippi received funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to implement nutrient reduction actions under EPA's Gulf Hypoxia Program. With the first phase of funding under this grant, MDEQ worked with partners to identify a set or projects that focused heavily on filling

data gaps and building tools that can help Mississippi establish a strong foundation for making management decisions. Specifically, these funds were used to implement a series of projects to better characterize nutrient loads from state waters into the Mississippi River, develop tools to estimate load reductions achieved from the implementation of nutrient reduction practices, and develop a better nutrient response measure.

## Nonpoint Source Pollution

Nonpoint Source Pollution is rainwater runoff that picks up and carries away a variety of pollutants as it flows over streets, parking lots, construction sites, and agricultural lands. The pollutants may then flow into rivers, oceans, and underground sources of drinking water. These pollutants include excess fertilizer, sediment, nutrients, pesticides, oil, grease, and bacteria from faulty septic systems.

During fiscal year 2025, the NPS Branch managed a total of ***25*** projects and activities totaling ***$2.288 million*** in federal funds. These projects may take from one to four years to complete and include, but are not limited to, education and outreach projects, water-quality monitoring projects, projects that implement Best Management Practices to demonstrate effectiveness of pollution reduction activities, agricultural and chemical waste disposal, and watershed protection and restoration projects.

## Coastal Nonpoint Source:
### Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendments

The Coastal Zone Reauthorization Amendments is federal legislation that requires all states along with the coast and those along the Great Lakes to establish a coastal nonpoint source program. In fiscal year 2025, MDEQ worked with state and federal partners to update documentation for previously approved management measures. This work will aid EPA and NOAA as they prepare Mississippi's coastal nonpoint source program for final public notice and approval.

## Basin Management Approach

The goal of Mississippi's Basin Management Approach is to restore and protect water resources of the state through collaborative development and implementation of effective management strategies that help improve water quality and quantity while fostering sound economic growth. To effectively carry out planning and implementation activities, the ten major river basins in Mississippi have been organized into four basin groups. Each basin group has a basin team comprised of representatives from federal, state, and local government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders. This program implements strategies that target priority watersheds throughout the state. Prioritization of these watersheds is an evolving process identified in coordination with resource agency partners as part of the basin-wide approach to water quality management.

The Basin Management and NPS Programs are implemented in cooperation with several agencies, organizations, and groups at all levels of government and in the private sector. A great focus is

given to activities that promote consensus building and partnering to increase overall effectiveness. One key partnership to increase this overall effectiveness is with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. MDEQ and NRCS work collaboratively using Section 319 funds for assessment and monitoring of the National Water Quality Initiative sites where NRCS has or will implement various conservation practices such as cover crops, filter strips, and terraces. In addition, NRCS uses geospatial data and watershed characterization information developed through the Basin Management Approach to help identify priority watersheds for targeted funding under the National Water Quality Initiative as well as other NRCS funding initiatives.

## Nonpoint Source Education and Outreach

The Nonpoint Source Educational Program increases public awareness of NPS pollution and encourages behavior changes that will reduce pollution impacts. NPS funds environmental teacher workshops throughout the state, Adopt a Stream, Project Learning Tree, Mississippi Envirothon, the Mobile Classroom, the Forestry BPM Survey Project and the Waste Pesticide Program. The NPS program also participates in conservation field days and other events all over the state to educate the public with ways to help reduce impacts of NPS pollution.

Scan for more information on water resources.

# Field Services

## Ambient Recreational Monitoring Network

MDEQ maintains a statewide ambient bacterial monitoring network for the purpose of assessing water quality conditions in streams, rivers, lakes, bayous, and estuaries throughout the state. Fifty-one Ambient Bacterial Monitoring sites are sampled in this network with an additional ***21*** beach monitoring sites. The sampling scheme includes the collection of a minimum of five bacteria samples at each station within a 30-day period during contact (May-October) and non-contact (November-April) seasons to obtain a geometric mean criterion for each site.

## Ambient Lake Monitoring

MDEQ collects chemical, physical, and biological samples from public lakes throughout the state. The lakes selected are greater than ***100 acres*** in size and are not fertilized. The program is scheduled in a triennial cycle so that each lake site has three years' worth of data before a new cycle with different lakes begins.

## Mississippi Benthic Index of Stream Quality

The Mississippi Benthic Index of Stream Quality is an index of biological integrity that is used to assess all wadeable non-tidal streams in Mississippi except for wadeable streams located in the Mississippi Alluvial Plain. Monitoring efforts completed as part of this effort have greatly increased the number of biological assessments conducted on state waters. The M-BISQ sampling program and the established sampling and analytical methodology contained therein now serve as the foundation for routine biological monitoring in MDEQ's statewide Ambient Monitoring Network.

## Fixed Station Ambient Monitoring

MDEQ's network of statewide ambient water quality monitoring stations provides systematic water quality sampling at regular intervals and uniform parametric coverage to monitor water quality status and trends over a long-term period. Sampling is carried out by MDEQ scientists from each of the agency's three regional offices and laboratory. There are currently ***37*** stations statewide, and laboratory analyses for the samples are carried out monthly by MDEQ's laboratory.

# Fish Tissue Monitoring Program

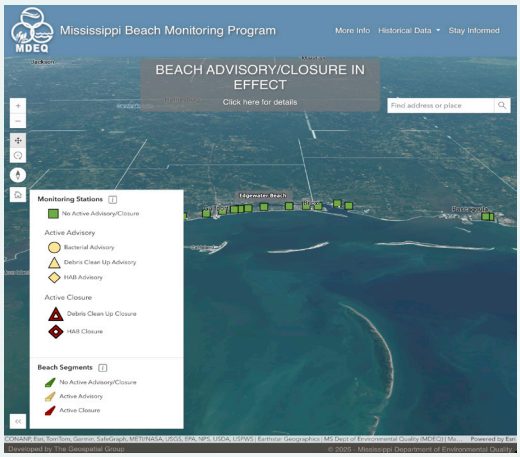
The MDEQ laboratory monitors fish tissue for contaminant levels that could be harmful to people that consume fish from the state's waters. When elevated levels of contaminants are found in fish tissue, the data is used by a multi-agency task force to determine if a fish tissue consumption warning or advisory is warranted. Presently, there are advisories for Mercury, DDT, Toxaphene, and PCBs on many state waters. Monitoring is currently focused on these areas to provide additional data that may contribute more information towards evaluating advisories in the Mississippi Delta.

# Coastal Monitoring

Mississippi's Coastal Assessment monitoring is conducted during the late summer index period (July to September) and includes biological, chemical, and physical sampling. The sites are selected using a probabilistic site selection methodology, and ***33 sites*** were sampled in fiscal year 2024. At the end of a five-year cycle, a minimum of ***125 sites*** have been sampled for the coastal monitoring program.

# Beach Monitoring Network

MDEQ maintains a statewide ambient bacterial monitoring network for the purpose of assessing water quality conditions in streams, rivers, lakes, bayous, and estuaries throughout the state. ***51*** Ambient Bacterial Monitoring sites are sampled in this network with an additional ***21*** beach monitoring sites. The sampling scheme includes the collection of a minimum of five bacteria samples at each station within a 30-day period during contact (May-October) and non-contact (November-April) seasons to obtain a geometric mean criterion for each site.




The beach monitoring website with live updates can be found at beaches.mdeq.ms.gov.

Catch a closer look at our beach monitoring program. https://youtu.be/zQjcxjGN9AY?si=BD-fe1s5Dn1BFrP4_

# MDEQ Permitting

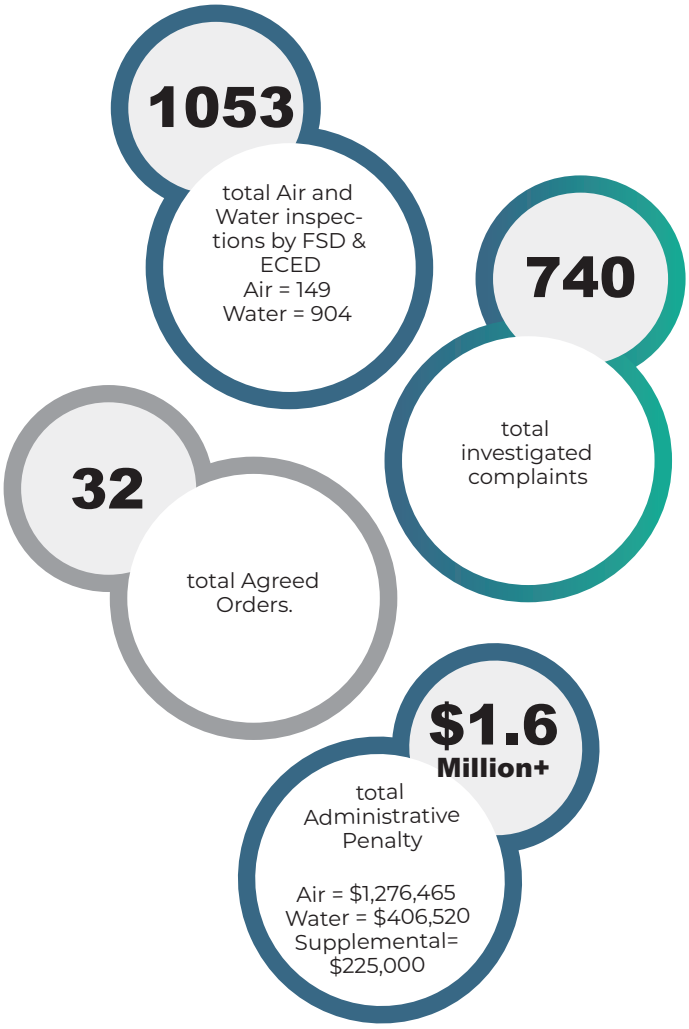
- **Office of Geology** - issued 25 initial and five amended permits.
- **Environmental Permitting Division** - issued, modified, or renewed 13 air construction permits, 30 air synthetic minor operating permits, 36 air Title V operating permits, 297 NPDES wastewater discharge permits, 51 pretreatment wastewater permits, 83 state operating wastewater permits, and 29 Section 401 Water Quality Certifications. In addition, EPD issued or modified 494 general permit coverages.
- **Waste Division** - issued, modified, or renewed 12 solid waste management permits, 17 authorizations for emergency debris management sites, one waste processing permit, and three RCRA permits; and
- **Office of Land and Water Resources** – issued 2,435 groundwater withdrawal permits and 44 surface water withdrawal/diversion permits.

MDEQ staff develop environmental permits in accordance with Mississippi state laws and regulations, which are then presented to the Mississippi Environmental Quality Permit Board for consideration. The Permit Board issues, reissues, modifies, denies, transfers, and revokes permits and certifications under state authority for air quality, water quality, hazardous waste, mining, solid waste, and water resource programs. These permits are federally enforceable where applicable under delegated programs.

MDEQ's Office of Geology manages permitting activities under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act. The Office of Land and Water Resources manages permitting activities under the water resources control laws. The Office of Pollution Control's Environmental Permits Division is responsible for Air Construction and Air Operating permits, Air Title V Operating permits, Wastewater - State No Discharge permits, Wastewater – NPDES permits, Wastewater – Pretreatment permits, Stormwater Construction and Operating permits, and Water Quality Certifications. The OPC's Waste Division is responsible for solid waste and waste tire permits, Beneficial Use Determinations, Emergency Debris management site approvals lagoon closure exemptions, Hazardous Waste operating and closure/post-closure care permits and generator ID numbers, and Underground Injection Control Program permits.

Currently there are more than ***20,000 sites*** in the agency's permitting database. Many of these sites have permits that, by state and federal regulation, expire every five or ten years and must be reissued. As new companies enter the state and existing companies have changes or modifications, these activities also require permitting actions.

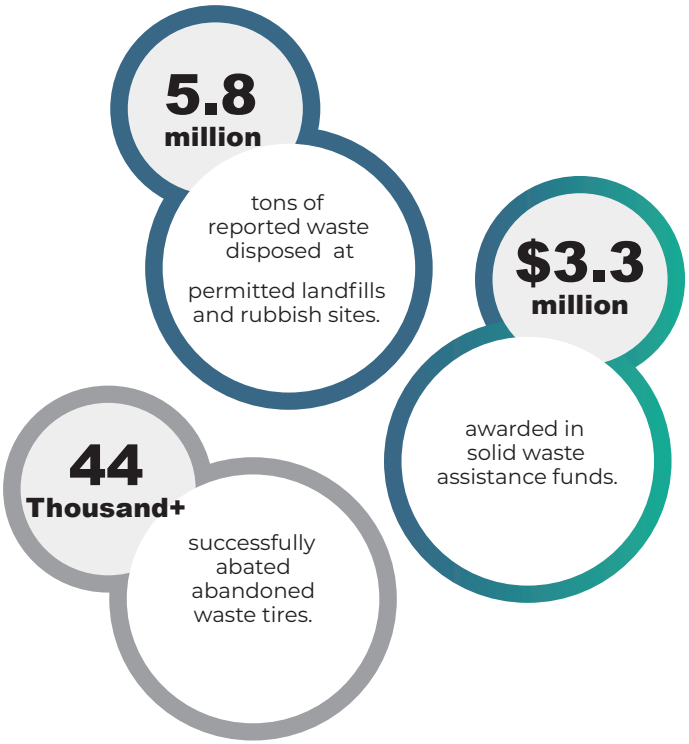
# Compliance and Enforcement




The Office of Pollution Control's Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Division implements and oversees the majority of MDEQ's air and water compliance and enforcement activities. When a site fails to comply with its permit(s) or regulations, appropriate enforcement action is taken to promptly return the site to compliance. During fiscal year 2025, the following number of air and water inspections were performed by ECED and the Field Services Division; ***149*** for compliance with air pollution regulations and permits. ***904*** for compliance with water pollution regulations and permits.

ECED actions resulted in ***32*** Agreed Orders being issued for non-compliance with air and water regulations and permits. Of the ***32*** Agreed Orders executed, 31 contained provisions for a penalty with a total of ***$1,682,985***. When appropriate, MDEQ allows the use of Supplemental Environmental Projects, projects that go beyond what is required to comply, to offset a portion of a cash penalty. ECED, in conjunction with the Field Services Division, is also responsible for responding to citizen complaints regarding air and water matters. During fiscal year 2025, MDEQ received and investigated ***740*** complaints related to air and water matters. When citizens report an environmental problem, they are asked to explain the nature of the problem and give the location of the problem, including directions to the site. A name is not required; however, if a name and contact information are provided, MDEQ either contacts the complainant during the investigation or provides the results of the investigation after the investigation is complete.

# Waste




MDEQ's Waste Division is responsible for ensuring that solid wastes generated in the state are managed in a manner that is protective of the environment and human health. Solid waste includes all types of garbage, refuse, debris, sludge, or other discarded materials from residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional sources. The Waste Division is home to a variety of programs that ensure the proper management of nonhazardous and hazardous waste, promote recycling and waste reduction programs and initiatives, and provide guidance and support to the stakeholders and the general public on waste related issues.

## Nonhazardous Solid Waste Management and Disposal Programs

MDEQ's Nonhazardous Solid Waste programs ensure the proper management of solid wastes, promote the reduction and recycling of solid wastes, and plan for future solid waste management needs. MDEQ regulates the management of solid wastes at storage sites, transfer stations, composting operations, recycling facilities, processing facilities, rubbish sites, landfills, and other types of solid waste management facilities.

*Solid Waste Permitting*

A listing of permitted solid waste management facilities can be found: https://www.mdeq.ms.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Active-Solid-Waste-Facility-Listing-Oct-2025COVERPAGE.pdf. During FY2025 the Waste Division issued ***12*** new or renewed solid waste management permits, authorizations for ***17*** temporary emergency debris management sites, and number of other solid waste related authorizations or exemptions.

Solid Waste Compliance

During FY2025, the Waste Division and Field Services Division conducted more than ***540*** compliance inspections at permitted solid waste management facilities and initiated and resolved ***15*** formal enforcement actions. Additionally, MDEQ staff (primarily regional staff from the Field Services Division), responded to almost ***300*** complaints related to illegal dumping and more than ***250*** complaints regarding the open burning of solid wastes.

*Solid Waste Reporting*

In early 2025, MDEQ collected annual reports from facility owners for the solid waste management activities conducted during the previous calendar year. These reports indicate that just over ***5.8*** million tons of waste were properly disposed of at permitted landfills and rubbish sites during calendar year 2024. Solid waste disposal facilities received just over ***1.2*** million tons of waste from out-of-state sources representing approximately ***20%*** of the total waste disposed at solid waste disposal facilities. The Waste Division produces a detailed summary report for each reporting year. The most recently completed reports may be found at the following web address or by contacting the Waste Division: https://www.mdeq.ms.gov/land/waste-division/solid-waste-management-programs/solid-waste-reporting/.

## Recycling and Waste Reduction Programs

Recent national market disruptions and supply-chain challenges have affected recycling programs across Mississippi. Many communities have reduced or discontinued services, lowering statewide access to recycling to an estimated ***50%*** of residents. Of those with access, roughly half receive curbside service and half use drop-off programs. Some residents without community programs may still recycle through private or nonprofit subscription services.

Material Recovery Facilities in Mississippi and neighboring states continue to face market pressures; however, demand for materials such as cardboard, mixed paper, and #1/#2 plastics has strengthened over the past year. Major corporate investments in U.S. recycling infrastructure also signal long-term improvement.

The Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling initiative also includes stakeholder engagement and planning to advance post-consumer materials management, attract additional recycling businesses, and strengthen Mississippi's recycling economy.

MDEQ continues to expand public access to recycling information through the State Recycling Directory, which provides updated details on where and how residents can recycle common and special materials. The agency also maintains current listings of regional Material Recovery Facilities and is developing new guidance for recycling transfer stations. https://www.mdeq.ms.gov/land/waste-division/solid-waste-management-programs/recycling/recycling-directory/

Internally, MDEQ has enhanced its agency recycling program by improving convenience, signage, and employee education. These practices serve as a model for other state agencies seeking to revive or improve their own programs.

MDEQ also collaborates with partners such as the Mississippi Recycling Coalition to provide education, outreach, and technical support aimed at sustaining and growing recycling across the state.

## Solid Waste Assistance and Waste Tire Grants Programs

The Waste Division administers several solid waste assistance programs that provide grant funding to support a variety of solid waste management activities, primarily to assist local governments.

During fiscal year 2025, over ***$3.3*** million in assistance funds were awarded. Of that total, approximately ***$2.3*** million was awarded in Solid Waste Assistance Grants to local governments for projects that involved clean-up of illegal dumps, establishment of collection programs for bulky wastes and recyclables, funding support for employing local solid waste enforcement officers, provision of household hazardous collection programs, conducting public information efforts on solid waste and recycling programs, and various other local waste management projects. These funds are annually awarded through two different categories of grants; the non-competitive (or allocated) grants to counties and the competitive grants available to local governments including municipalities, counties, solid waste regional management authorities, solid waste districts, and other local government organizations.

### Grant Awards for Fiscal Year 2025

- Fifty-one counties were awarded $1 million through the non-competitive (or allocated) Solid Waste Assistance Grants program.
- Twenty-seven additional local governments were awarded $1.2 million through the competitive Solid Waste Assistance Grants program.
- Thirty local governments were awarded $1 million in waste tire grants. Of that total, eight local governments were awarded $110,248 in supplemental waste tire grant funds for the funding support of employing a local solid waste enforcement officer.
- One local government was awarded $31,500 to fund efforts to develop an updated, local comprehensive solid waste management plan.
- Four local governments were awarded non-competitive and competitive solid waste assistance grants for their proposed recycling programs.

# Solid Waste Planning

State law requires that each local government (primarily counties) develop and implement local, comprehensive solid waste management plans that address solid waste management programs, services, facilities, and needs within the jurisdiction over a 20-year period. The Waste Division works with local governments to develop and implement these plans and ensure that amendments and updates to the plans are completed in accordance with state law. During fiscal year 2025, the MDEQ Waste Division completed review and approval of ***one*** comprehensively updated plan and approved major amendments to ***two*** plans.

# Waste Tire Management Programs

The Waste Division administers the Mississippi Waste Tire Management Program which includes a number of regulatory programs, an incentive grants program for increasing waste tire recycling activities, and a waste tire abatement program to assist with the clean-up of legacy and other large illegal waste tire dumps. The Waste Tire Program also promotes and encourages waste tire recycling.

*Waste Tire Permitting*

During FY2025 the Waste Division issued one new waste tire permits. Additionally, ***76*** waste tire hauler identification numbers were issued or reissued. These identifications are renewed annually. A listing of permitted waste tire collection and processing facilities can be found here: https://www.mdeq.ms.gov/land/waste-division/solid-waste-management-programs/waste-tire-management-program/.

*Waste Tire Compliance*

During FY2025 the MDEQ Waste Division and Field Services Division conducted more than ***215*** compliance inspections at permitted waste tire management facilities. Additionally, MDEQ staff (primarily regional staff from the Field Services Division), responded to almost ***150*** complaints related to illegal dumping of waste tires.

*Waste Tire Recycling*

Over the last two years, recycling markets have declined nationally, likely attributable to a combination of challenging market conditions and increased transportation and processing costs, and the result has been a significant increase in the amount of processed waste tires being landfilled. Consequently, in calendar year 2024, only about ***26%*** of all waste tires managed within the Mississippi program were ultimately recycled. As recycling markets settle and as additional processing capacity is permitted in Mississippi, MDEQ anticipates that the state waste tire recycling rate will normalize beginning in fiscal year 2026.

## Electronic Waste Management Programs

MDEQ helps communities, businesses, and residents properly recycle and dispose of electronic waste by maintaining an online directory of certified e-waste recyclers. The agency also supports implementation of the state's Certified Electronics Recyclers Law, which requires state agencies to use certified recyclers for end-of-life electronics. MDEQ continues to promote certification programs offered by Sustainable Electronics Recycling International and e-Stewards, encouraging the use of responsible, certified recycling businesses.

MDEQ also provides grants and technical assistance for local e-waste collection events, often held alongside household hazardous waste programs. In FY2025, ***two*** events hosted by the Greater Jackson Chamber Partnership at the Jackson Farmers Market collected nearly ***19,000 pounds*** of e-waste for recycling. Additionally, MDEQ supported the Hinds County–funded computer refurbishment program at Jackson State University, which repairs donated computers for redistribution to families, nonprofits, and community programs while providing technical training for young adults.

## Medical Waste Management Programs

*Commercial Medical Waste*

MDEQ shares regulatory authority with the Mississippi State Department of Health for medical waste management. This includes oversight of medical wastes collected and transported from health care facilities and veterinary care facilities, emergency and trauma response, business and institutional clinics, and medical wastes generated in private residences through home healthcare. In addition, MDEQ regulates commercial medical waste management activities at the three active (and two inactive) commercial autoclave facilities for the treatment of infectious medical wastes.

*Household Medical Sharps*

MDEQ oversees a voluntary statewide sharps collection program and an associated educational program for the safe disposal of medical syringes, needles, lancets, and other devices generated within the home. Local pharmacies, fire stations, and other businesses volunteer their locations as convenient drop-off stations for the public. During fiscal year 2025, ***12,302 pounds*** of household medical sharps were collected through this program. Eight businesses registered during fiscal year 2025 as new drop-off collection stations. A total of ***288*** collection stations exist throughout the state.

*Pharmaceutical Waste*

Federal regulations prohibit flushing or washing of household medications and other similar products down a toilet or sink. MDEQ promotes efforts by the Mississippi Department of Public Safety to offer dropbox locations for prescription drug and expired pharmaceutical at various offices of the Mississippi Highway Patrol and other local law enforcement agencies. https://www.dps.ms.gov/narcotics/prescription-drop-box-locations The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration also offers periodic drug take-back events in partnership with local law enforcement.

## Organic Wastes

MDEQ promotes the reduction, recycling and proper management of organic wastes that originate from plants or animals and are biodegradable such as grass clippings, leaves, limbs and woody debris, food wastes, biosolids and other organic sludges, animal manure, and certain commercial and industrial woody or plant-based wastes. The reuse or recycling of organic wastes involves processes such as composting, mulching, anaerobic digestion, and land application of the wastes for soil amendment purposes.

*Composting and Mulching*

Annual report information from composting and mulching facilities indicated that over ***42,000 tons*** of wastes were collected and processed as compost or mulch in calendar year 2024. MDEQ has continued to work towards streamlining and simplifying the state's composting and processing facility regulations and permitting process.

*Biosolids Land Application*

The Waste Division issues environmental permits for the land application of biosolids. In calendar year 2024, nearly ***19,000 tons*** of biosolids were land applied as an agricultural soil amendment. In addition, MDEQ's Beneficial Use program allows for the soil amendment use of Exceptional Quality biosolids, and some Beneficial Use Determinations have been approved for such use of biosolids.

## Landfill Methane Outreach Program

MDEQ maintains a partnership with EPA through the Landfill Methane Outreach Program to promote the use of landfill gas as an alternative energy source. Landfill gas is a byproduct of the decay of municipal solid wastes in landfills and contains methane, a potent greenhouse gas that can be captured and used to fuel power plants, manufacturing facilities, vehicles, homes, and more. Mississippi currently has active landfill gas-to-energy projects at five different landfills. These projects result in significant carbon dioxide and methane emission reductions annually. For list of Mississippi projects and program benefits please visit: https://www.mdeq.ms.gov/land/waste-division/solid-waste-management-programs/mississippi-landfill-methane-outreach-program/.

## Beneficial Use Program

The Waste Division promotes the beneficial use of nonhazardous by-product materials that would otherwise be disposed of in landfills or managed under a solid waste management permit. MDEQ may issue a Beneficial Use Determination (BUD) to industries and other waste generators requesting to use or distribute non-hazardous industrial by-product for use in the place of products or raw materials. Common by-products approved through the program include certain ashes, lime muds, foundry slags, FSD gypsum, wastewater treatment residuals (including some biosolids) and other similar by-products.

A listing of current BUD's and other information can be found here: https://www.mdeq.ms.gov/land/waste-division/solid-waste-management-programs/mississippi-beneficial-use-program/. During FY2025, MDEQ issued ***one*** new beneficial use determination.

Annual report figures provided to MDEQ indicated that BUD holders distributed over ***910,000 tons*** of by-product materials for beneficial uses in calendar year 2024. Approximately ***60%*** of the by-products distributed were used for construction purposes while approximately ***40%*** of materials were used in soil amendment applications with the remaining less than ***1%*** for other uses.

## Solid Waste Training and Certification Programs

MDEQ partners with the state and national chapters of the Solid Waste Association of North America to provide training and certification to commercial solid waste landfill operators. MDEQ issued certificates for ***one*** new landfill operator and ***13*** renewals for existing landfill operators. At the end of fiscal year 2025, there were ***43*** active commercial landfill operator certifications.

MDEQ also offers a state-developed certification program for commercial Class I rubbish site operators. MDEQ conducted one virtual rubbish operator training class in fiscal year 2025, followed by an in-person examination session. MDEQ issued certificates for ***23*** new rubbish operators and ***46*** renewals for existing rubbish operators. At the end of fiscal year 2025, there were ***153*** active Class I rubbish site operator certifications.

MDEQ also promotes training opportunities offered through SWANA and other similar organizations for continuing education for landfill and Class I rubbish site operators. Fall and spring conferences were held by the state chapter of SWANA and MDEQ attends and assists with these events where needed.

## Mississippi Correction Action Trust Fund

The Waste Division administers the Mississippi Nonhazardous Solid Waste Corrective Action Trust Fund to evaluate or address problems at historic landfills. The CATF provides an opportunity for financial assistance to the landfill site owners to conduct preventative or corrective actions at municipal solid waste landfills that closed prior to the effective date of the Federal Subtitle D Regulations on or about October 1, 1993. A landfill owner can request assistance from the fund for actions related to either a known release or to evaluate or assess a potential release of contaminants from the landfill. The uses of the funds could include monitoring or abating problem conditions such as onsite or offsite impacts from potential groundwater contamination or landfill gas migration or remediating other forms of contamination at an eligible landfill site.

## Hazardous Waste Management Program

MDEQ's Hazardous Waste Management Program ensures that hazardous wastes are managed,

treated, and disposed of in a manner which protects communities and the environment. The MDEQ is delegated authority by EPA to manage and implement many aspects the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and MDEQ adopts these federal regulations by reference. MDEQ is not currently authorized by EPA to administer the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments Corrective Action portion of the RCRA program. Therefore, EPA continues to manage this area of the program in Mississippi in coordination with MDEQ.

On April 25, 2025, EPA formally approved updates to MDEQ's Hazardous Waste Program to include all State rulemakings adopted through May 26, 2022. Currently, there are two permitted operating facilities which treat or store hazardous waste and one permitted operating facility regulated under EPA's permitting authority. There are also ***16*** permitted facilities conducting remediation and post-closure activities for historic hazardous waste units. MDEQ also provides compliance oversight, as well as outreach for hazardous waste generators, to approximately ***113*** large quantity generators and ***275*** small quantity generators are operating throughout Mississippi. The MDEQ Hazardous Waste Program met its compliance oversight obligations as per the EPA program delegation requirements conducting ***44*** inspections of hazardous waste management facilities during federal fiscal year 2025.

In addition, the Hazardous Waste Branch provides support to the agency's Household Hazardous Waste Grants program with review of Household Hazardous Waste programs and coordinating additional MDEQ staffing support to local community events.

## Underground Injection Control Program

MDEQ's Waste Division administers the agency's underground injection control program, overseeing the disposal of certain nonhazardous and hazardous aqueous industrial wastes by deep well injection practices. MDEQ is the designated regulatory authority by EPA for the protection of underground sources of drinking water through the regulation of Class I, III, IV, and V Underground Injection Control wells. The MDEQ UIC program is managed by the Geotechnical Programs Branch in the Waste Division. Class II and Class VI wells are regulated by the Mississippi State Oil and Gas Board as delegated by EPA and state law.

The UIC program's responsibilities in the protection of underground sources of drinking water include the regulation of ***11*** permitted Class I UIC wells and over ***7,500*** Class V wells. MDEQ also has regulatory authority over Class III and Class IV wells, but no wells of these classifications exist in the state. The UIC program did not permit or renewal any wells during the year.

## Pollution Prevention (P2) Programs

The MDEQ Pollution Prevention Program is coordinated by the Waste Division with support from other air, water, and waste media programs in the agency. The P2 program coordinates multiple activities focusing on the reduction of wastes at the source that can impact the environment.

The Mississippi P2 program also assists industries, businesses and government agencies and institutions with pollution prevention and waste minimization efforts, including:

- **technical assistance** on hazardous and non-hazardous waste management;
- **supporting and facilitating** Economy, Energy, and Environment (E3) initiatives designed to focus on sustainability; and
- **reviewing, managing, and monitoring** the waste minimization plans, annual waste minimization certified reports, and the calculation of the annual P2 fees for Toxic Release Inventory Form Filers and Hazardous Waste Generators.

During FY2025 the P2 Program reviewed and monitored ***198*** annual waste minimization certified reports submitted by various industries and facilities around the state. The P2 Program staff, along with a team of other MDEQ staff and support contractors, conducted an E3 sustainability assessment of the Anel Corporation facility located in Winona, MS. This assessment was conducted to review and provide constructive recommendations regarding key areas relevant to sustainable manufacturing practices, including lean manufacturing methods, facility energy usage, and management of environmental matters. Additionally, the program conducted several outreach efforts including a promotional booth at the state MMA conference, speaking at the MDA SEMP work session, supporting the Siemens Energy, Environmental, Health, Safety Fair, and distributed other promotion and support media.

*enHance Environmental Stewardship Program*

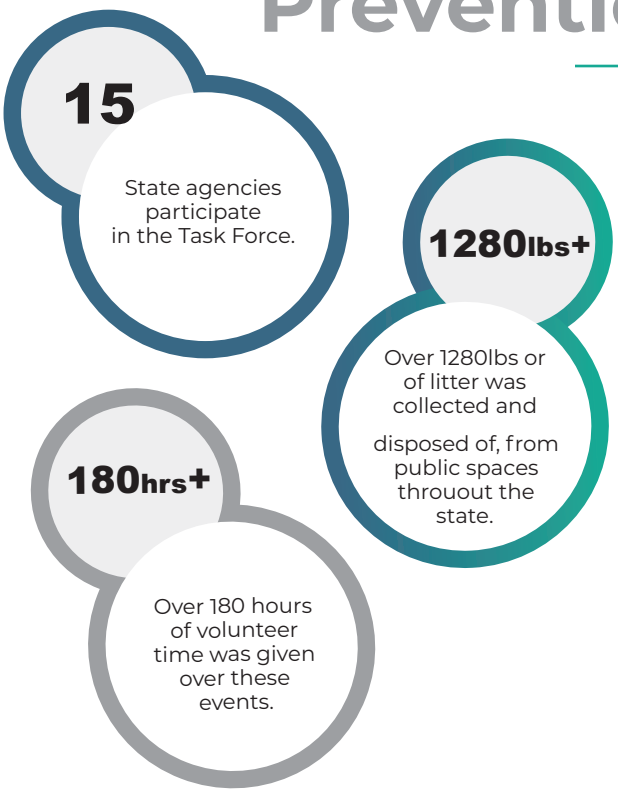
The P2 program also sponsors the agency's environmental stewardship recognition program, enHance. The enHance program has grown to ***32*** active members representing top environmental performers throughout the state. enHance is a voluntary stewardship program that recognizes committed environmental leaders who accomplish goals beyond their standard regulatory requirements. enHance is open to manufacturing facilities, cities, counties, and other organizations who are interested in the program and meet the eligibility requirements.

On August 11, 2025, the MDEQ and its P2 support contractor, EPL Advisors, co-hosted the 2025 enHance Annual Workshop and Awards Luncheon. During the event, MDEQ recognized the 2025 enHance Class, accepting ***11*** renewing members and ***one*** new member. Additional information on the MDEQ enHance Program including current members, membership applications, workshops and activities calendars, and other P2 related resources can be found here: https://www.mdeq.ms.gov/land/waste-division/enhance/

## Since 2009, enHance members have implemented projects that have resulted in:

- The elimination of over 1.7 million pounds of hazardous waste,
- The reduction, reuse or recycling of over 1.6 million tons of solid waste,
- The conservation of more than 369 million gallons of water per year,
- The reduction of more than 6 billion kilowatt hours of annual energy use and over 21 million MMBTUs of total annual energy savings,
- Significant reductions in air emissions, with a CO2e reduction of almost 9 million tons,
- and a total costs savings of almost $12 million.

# Mississippi Litter Prevention Task Force




MDEQ chairs the Mississippi Litter Prevention Task Force, an initiative of the Office of the First Lady. The Task Force brings together government agencies, community organizations and leaders, and committed businesses to clean and beautify Mississippi by reducing and preventing litter on state roadways and waterways. The Task Force is following a strategic action plan focused on public information, community partners, and infrastructure.

This year's efforts resulted in significant progress through expanded volunteer engagement, strengthened partnerships, development of statewide messaging, creative asset production, and consistent coordination across more than 15 participating agencies. The Task Force participated in multiple cleanup events, resulting in over 1,280 pounds of litter collected and disposed of from public spaces around the state.

# MS Municipality & County Water Infrastructure

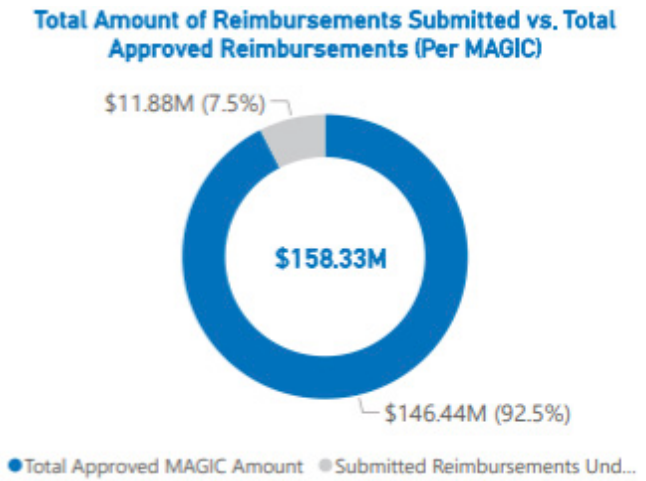
**414**
Grants awarded to 258 subrecipients

**$423 Million+**
in Grant Funds Awarded.

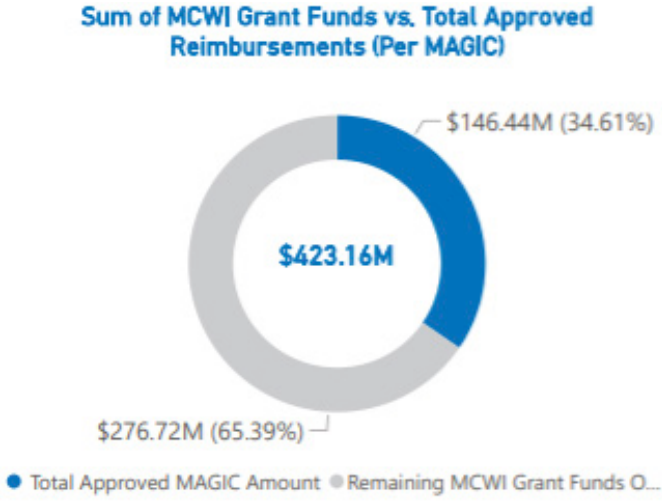
**$149 Million+**
in Grant Funds Paid to sub-recipients as of June 30, 2025

**104**
of the 414 Grant funded projects have been completed as of June 30th, 2025.

Senate Bill 2822 was signed into law on April 26, 2022. It created the MCWI Grant Program through which MDEQ was appropriated $491,000,000 of American Rescue Plan Act ("ARPA") funding made available for infrastructure projects involving Drinking Water, Clean Water and Storm Water.




as of June 30, 2025.




as of June 30, 2025.

Subrecipients must submit all invoices requesting MCWI Grant funds by September 30, 2026.

# Environmental Operator Training

The training calendar included ***69*** days of agency-sponsored training classes. Of these training days, ***55*** were co-sponsored with the three wastewater-related professional associations (Mississippi Water and Pollution Control Operators' Association, Mississippi Water Environment Association, and Mississippi Rural Water Association). Attendance totaled ***922*** operators, utility managers, and engineers, and certification exams were administered to ***164*** prospective operators with a total number of ***242*** new and renewal certificates issued. There are currently ***680*** certified pollution control operators in the state.

The MDEQ Operators Training program staff have partnered with the Mississippi Rural Water Association and the Mississippi Water Pollution Control Operators Association to speak at functions for the Mississippi Municipal League with the goal of increasing communication between operators and municipal officials. The training staff also provides onsite technical assistance to municipal, commercial, and industrial wastewater facilities. This assistance program provides "no cost" assistance in return to or maintain compliance with their wastewater permits.

# Water Pollution Control Revolving Fund

The Water Pollution Control Revolving Loan Fund program provides low interest loans to public entities in the state for construction, repair, or replacement of wastewater, stormwater, and nonpoint source pollution projects. Funding for these projects comes from federal grants, state matches, repayments, and interest on deposits. Additional subsidy funding is also currently available for "small and low-income community" WPCRLF projects. During fiscal year 2025, MDEQ funded ***16*** new WPCRLF projects totaling ***$170 million***.

# Water Pollution Control Emergency Loan Fund

The Water Pollution Control Emergency Loan Fund program provides loans to communities for the emergency construction, repair, or replacement of wastewater collection and treatment facilities. The WPCELF currently has approximately ***$3.1 million*** available for such emergency projects. MDEQ encourages communities throughout the state to utilize this program whenever funds for emergency wastewater projects are needed.

# Office of
# Land and Water Resources

**215**

drillers licenses issued or renewed. All available data for new water wells in the state were added to a database management system.

**60**

water wells sampled in a continuing effort to acertain if ag pratices are affecting the quality of groundwater aquifer systems

**17**

water well levels measured to study the groundwater resources in Hinds, Madison and Rankin Counties.

The Office of Land and Water Resources pursues a conjunctive water management approach that coordinates the use of the ground water and surface water resources of the state to satisfy desired water needs. OLWR ensures the use, storage, allocation, and management of water resources and that water pumped and impounded in Mississippi complies with applicable permit regulations. OLWR has programs that include the development and implementation of monitoring plans to accomplish the systematic collection, compilation, and management of data related to aquifers, streams, and lakes; water use surveys and meter reporting tools; the application of computer models to assist in making water management decisions; the review and processing of applications for permit issuance and modification; and enforcement of ground and surface water use permits.

OLWR is also responsible for licensing and regulating water well contractors; regulating the design, construction, and modification of certain dams in accordance with regulatory criteria to ensure that lives and property downstream are protected; and assessing potential contamination threats to public, domestic and industrial water supplies In Fiscal Year 2025, OLWR continued to engage large water users in industry, agriculture, public drinking water, and the energy sector to balance water use and economic development. In the Mississippi Delta, OLWR is developing innovative approaches to studying and addressing water sustainability in the heavily utilized alluvial aquifer. OLWR is also monitoring irrigation use outside of the Delta to mitigate competition with domestic and public supply drinking water resources.

# Water Resource Permitting and Management

The primary objective of the OLWR is to research and manage the water resources of the state to assure adequate supplies for the future. This is achieved by the coordinated interaction of the water withdrawal permitting process with the inventorying and assessment of the availability of water from freshwater aquifers and major freshwater streams. As the entity responsible for managing the water withdrawal permits, OLWR issued ***2,623*** new and renewal groundwater permits and ***47*** new and renewal surface water diversion permits in Fiscal Year 2025. Included in each permit is an established maximum withdrawal amount and any necessary special terms and conditions associated with a respective permit. For surface water permits, stream flows and lake levels are routinely monitored, and in the event that these fall below established standards, permittees are required to cease withdrawing water until flows rise above established minimums.

OLWR's Certification and Compliance Branch handles compliance and enforcement actions associated with water well drillers' licensing, terms, and conditions associated with groundwater and surface water withdrawal permits, and any other compliance issues. The branch works with industry, public suppliers, water well drillers, and other members of the regulated community to bring those entities into compliance with state laws and regulations. In addition, the Branch continued working with producers in the Mississippi Delta to verify compliance of conservation practices on farms as required by the terms and conditions of their groundwater withdrawal permits.

# Assessment and Study of Water Resources

The abundant water supplies in Mississippi constitute one of the most important and valuable natural resources contributing directly to the quality of life and economic prosperity of the state. However, the water resources available in a given area of the state can vary significantly depending on various hydrogeologic conditions that may affect base flow in streams, water quality and quantity as well as the prolificacy of local aquifers.

The highly variable nature of these resources means that a concerted effort must be maintained to collect related groundwater and surface water data that will allow proper decisions to be made regarding the management and development of the state's water resources. OLWR monitors groundwater levels of the state's major freshwater aquifer systems, and reports and potentiometric maps are created to document changes in water levels. Additionally, the OLWR conducts in-depth

regional hydrologic investigations of Mississippi's groundwater resources to gain a better understanding of water supplies in regionally prioritized areas. The OLWR staff provides a wide range of information useful for planning economic development projects, groundwater modeling, and development of groundwater resources for public drinking water supplies.

Water-level data from wells in the Mississippi River Valley Alluvial aquifer is being collected and evaluated to monitor the effects of pumping and to assist in development of water management practices. The OLWR is also working with the U.S. Geological Survey to update, refine, and utilize the Mississippi Delta portion of an existing regional groundwater flow model developed by USGS. This large-scale regional model covers the entire Mississippi embayment and extends through the primary drinking-water aquifers as part of the Mississippi Embayment Regional Aquifer Study. This model will be used to better understand the groundwater flow system, the potential effects of variations in pumping patterns, and to evaluate various water resources management scenarios. New data continue to be collected for integration into the existing groundwater flow model.

USGS continuous stream gauging stations were monitored and mapped by the OLWR to evaluate low flow conditions in streams, or reaches of streams, to ensure the water bodies did not fall below their respective statistical low flow averages. During such low flow events, on-site streamflow measurements are made where necessary to validate special terms and conditions related to surface water permit requirements. OLWR staff are also participating in a project monitoring surface water levels in several wildlife refuges and wildlife management areas in order to assist in a migratory birds assessment being conducted by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

In order to achieve the Clean Water Act's goal of protecting, restoring, and enhancing the biological integrity of aquatic ecosystems, and the need to use consistent, reliable, and defensible data for water resources management and regulatory purposes MDEQ developed the Mississippi Benthic Index of Stream Quality. OLWR measures streamflow at the M-BISQ sites. ***76*** M-BISQ sites were measured by OLWR this year.

## Water Resources in the Mississippi Delta

The future of the Mississippi Delta's economic and environmental viability depends on abundant, accessible water of sufficient quality. Over 19,500 permitted irrigation wells screened in the shallow MRVA are used for irrigation, aquaculture, and wildlife management purposes. Over time, pumpage demands have continued to exceed recharge to the MRVA leading to continued overbalances of groundwater withdrawals versus aquifer recharge, disconnected surface and ground water interaction, and notable water-level declines in the aquifer. To address serious threats to the viability of the Mississippi Delta's MRVA aquifer and Delta-wide stream flows, MDEQ created an executive-level task force to address these water resource challenges in 2011, and a 2014 Executive Order created the Governor's Delta Sustainable Water Resources Task Force.

The Delta Sustainable Water Resources Task Force and its workgroups consist of various

state and federal agencies, stakeholder organizations, and academia all focused on the development and implementation of approaches and strategies to ensure sustainable ground and surface water resources for current and future generations in the Mississippi Delta. In Fiscal Year 2021, OLWR adopted a new general permit (MRVA-003), which updated conservation measures as a way to encourage continued adoption of water conservation practices via the permitting process. In Fiscal Year 2025, ***2,140*** permits and certificates of coverage under the general permit were issued with conservation requirements as part of the special terms and conditions of the permit and certificate of coverage. An online reporting portal developed by OLWR specifically designed to receive meter reading data from participants continues to yield valuable information that will be critical to improving total pumpage estimates and model accuracy.

## Source Water Protection

OLWR Source Water Assessment Branch has the primary responsibility of coordinating groundwater quality protection efforts through the source water assessment program to notify public water supplies and customers of the relative susceptibility of their drinking water supplies to contamination.

The program also helps site the proper locations for new drinking water wells. OLWR staff worked closely with ***1,422*** public water systems, consisting of approximately ***2,852*** groundwater wells and five surface water intakes, to strengthen protection efforts of underground sources of public drinking water supply. 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.

## Drillers Licensing

OLWR manages and maintains the testing and licensing of water well drillers. Applications for licenses are received along with verification of applicants' basic requirements through testing in accordance with state law and state regulations so current license holders are in compliance. During Fiscal Year 2025, the Drillers Licensing Program issued or renewed 215 licenses. MDEQ staff taught a continuing education course regarding Mississippi drilling laws and regulations at three drilling conferences in Mississippi and one in Tennessee.

Scan for more information on land resources.

# Mississippi Agricultural Chemical Groundwater Monitoring Program

Over ***90%*** of Mississippi relies on groundwater for drinking water supply. Due to this dependence, there are concerns that agricultural chemicals may impact the valuable groundwater resources in the state. The Agricultural Chemical Monitoring Program determines what, if any, impact these practices may be having. For Fiscal Year 2025, OLWR staff sampled ***60*** water wells in a continuing effort to ascertain if agricultural practices are affecting the quality of groundwater aquifer systems statewide. This data is reported to well owners who have concerns about their domestic drinking water. As of Fiscal Year 2025, the program has sampled over ***3,000*** groundwater sources throughout the state, and to date, results indicate that no significant impacts to groundwater quality are directly attributable to agricultural practices.

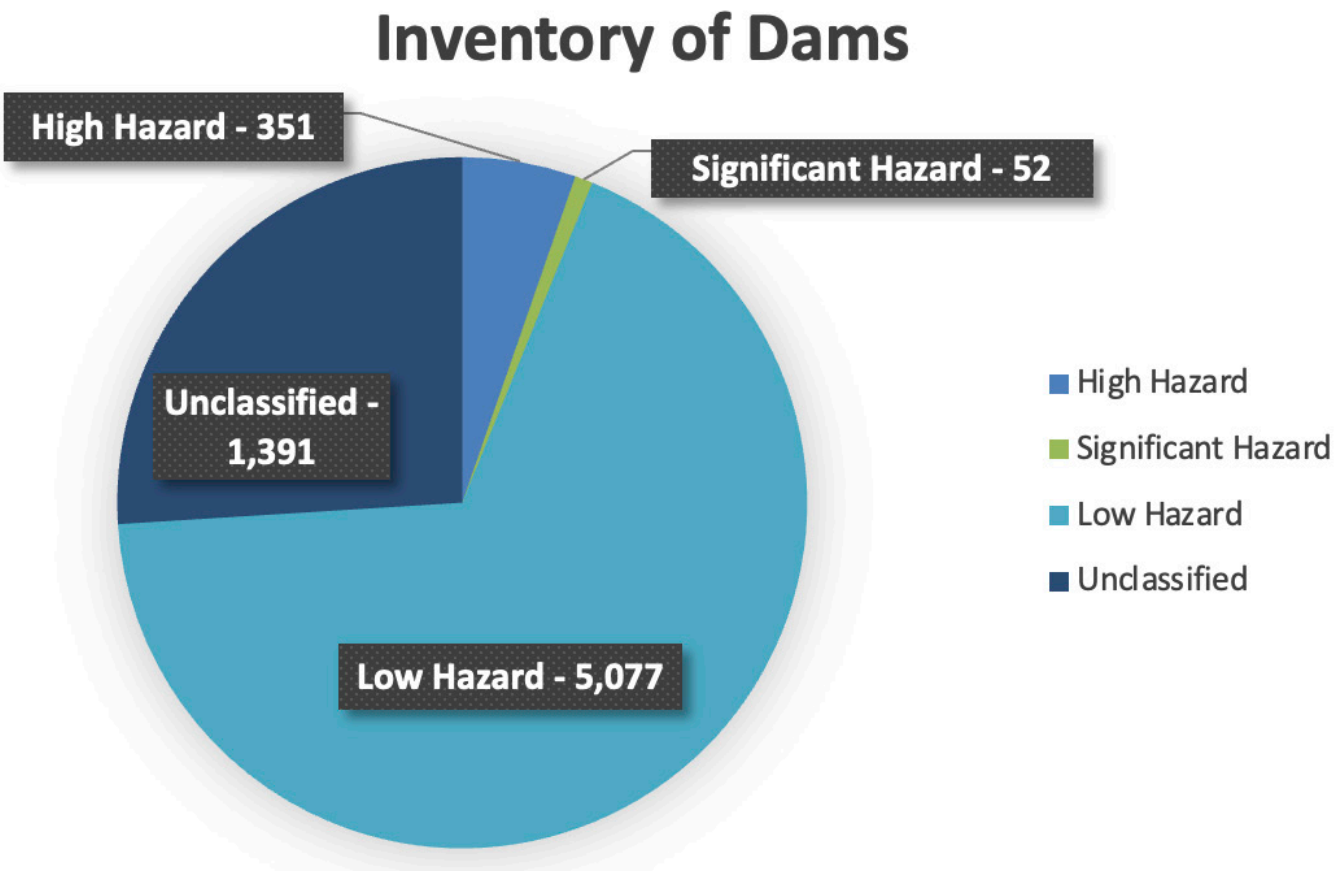

# Dam Safety

The state's dam safety regulations were implemented to protect life and property downstream of manmade dams. Dams are classified as either High Hazard, Significant Hazard, or Low Hazard in accordance with Dam Safety Regulations.

The OWLR Dam Safety Division reviews plans for repairs or modifications to existing dams, for the construction of new dams, conducts dam inspections, performs engineering analyses of dams, and reviews and approves Emergency Action Plans for High Hazard dams in addition to other duties.

**Dam Safety Objective:**

Protect downstream lives and property by ensuring that dams are properly classified, inspected, and maintained and include a current Emergecy Action Plan.




There are currently ***6,871*** dams on inventory in Mississippi including unclassified dams. Unclassified dams are dams upon which preliminary engineering analysis shows that it could potentially be either High or Significant Hazard, but further analysis is needed for proper classification.

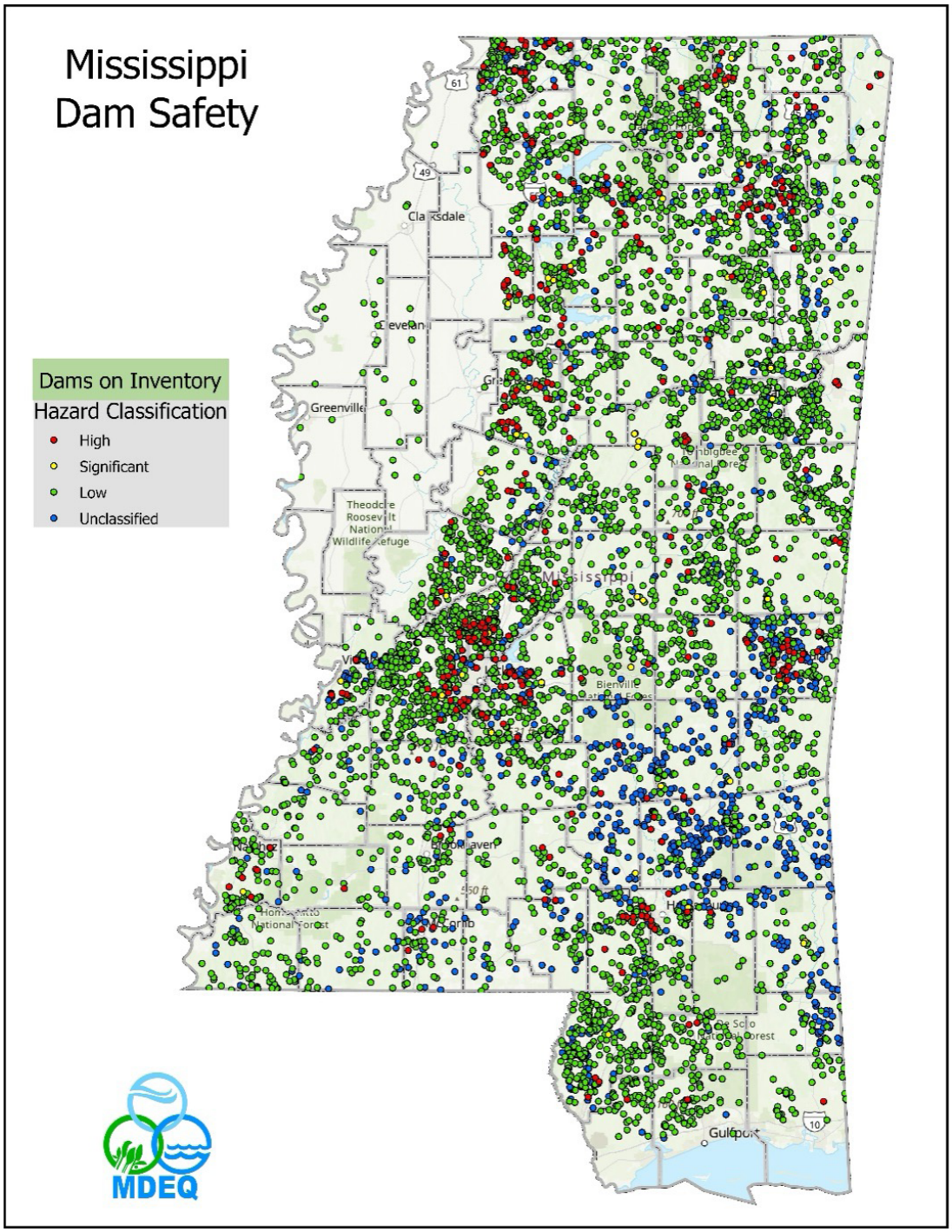
Regulations require that dam owners perform annual inspections of their High and Significant Hazard dams and have periodic inspections performed by a registered professional engineer at least once every five years. Dam owners are required to address any deficiencies noted during inspections resulting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

During Fiscal Year 2025, ***554*** inspections were performed on 367 dams, and the information produced by these inspections resulted in dam owners initiating repairs or rehabilitation on at least 16 High Hazard dams. The Division also reviewed and approved applications to modify 16 High Hazard dams and construct ***14*** new dams.

There are currently ***327*** Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) on file for High Hazard dams, and the Division's goal is to have all owners of High Hazard dams submit EAPs for review and approval. Compliance with this goal presently stands at a Mississippi record high of ***93%***. The approval process includes review and approval at the county level by the local Emergency Management Agency and all first responders that would be required to implement the plans. This procedure has extended the anticipated schedule for completing the documents, but the involvement of local agencies in the plan development greatly enhances the value of the plans in safeguarding lives and property

in the event of a dam failure.

One of the other major duties of the Dam Safety Division is to respond to dam incidents and failures. During the 2025 Fiscal Year, staff engineers responded to eight dam incidents and were able to mitigate those emergencies successfully. During emergencies, the Dam Safety Division provides on-site response and technical assistance to county emergency managers and dam owners. There were six dam failures during the year three of which were high hazard dams.




MDEQ's Dam Safety Division also oversees the Mississippi Dam Safety Grant Fund, a grant program designed to provide funding to high hazard dam owners for the rehabilitation or removal of high hazard dams. Since 2021, the program has awarded ***$5,944,424.64*** in state grant dollars to dam owners for repairs to ***42*** high hazard dams throughout the state. The award amount is limited to ***$300,000*** per project and requires a cost match of at least ***35%*** from the dam owner. Twenty-seven projects have been fully completed with the remaining ***16*** projects on track to be closed out by the end of SFY 2026

Scan for more information on water resources.

# Office of **Geology**

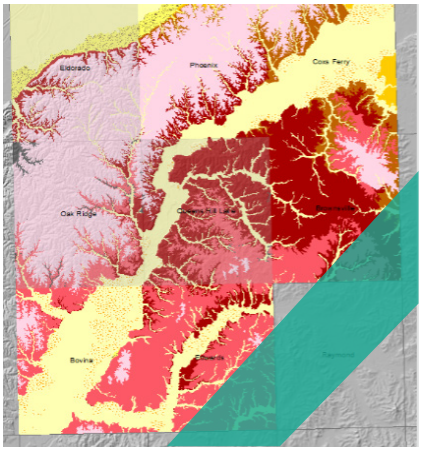
- Published eleven individual geologic quadrangle maps, including three 7.5-minute geologic quadrangle maps with support from our STATEMAP 2025 grant.
- Published a syllabus with the Mississippi State University's Extension Service for outdoor environmental activities for a club for the state's 4-H programs called the 4-H Geo/Arch Club. The syllabus has also been used in Alabama.
- Completed the Excavation of a fossil mosasaur skeleton and delivered the skeleton to the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science.
- Excavated a mammoth tusk and delivered it to the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science.

The Office of Geology serves as MDEQ's primary data-collection and scientific resource for Mississippi's surface and subsurface geology. It is the state's central repository for geological and mineral resource information and provides guidance on issues related to applied geology, mineral resources, and geologic hazards. The office evaluates and reports on valuable resources such as oil, natural gas, gravel, clay, limestone, coal, water, lithium, and rare earth elements—information essential to economic development. It also regulates surface mining and reclamation under state law and leads development of the Mississippi Digital Earth Model.

# Environmental Geology

The Environmental Geology Division provides geologic and hydrologic information to water well contractors, engineering firms, consultants, and other MDEQ entities by conducting geotechnical investigations. Research is provided in response to known or suspected cases of groundwater contamination. These programs are utilizing the Office of Geology's drilling and wireline equipment and personnel to analyze and characterize geologic and hydrologic conditions at specific sites and to construct groundwater monitoring wells; this work will continue in FY 2025. The division is responsible for collecting and archiving subsurface geological samples from oil and gas tests drilled in the state. These data are maintained at the Office's warehouse for use by explorationists and others interested in exploiting the hydrocarbon potential of the state. Environmental Geology activities provide geotechnical data applicable to managing geologic hazards, resolving contamination and water resources problems, and modeling structural responses to unstable geologic conditions. Geological aspects of earthquake shaking from the New Madrid seismic zone are being studied. These essential geological data collection and support activities will continue in FY 2025.

Environmental Geology Division staff logged ***53*** test holes and water wells during FY 2025. The program collected ***33,672*** feet of data on test holes that otherwise would not have been wireline logged. The data collection program also accepted an additional ***5,124*** ft of data on test holes from Teaco Geophysical, LLC. Division personnel maintained the core and sample library by cataloging and archiving samples from oil and gas tests drilled in the state. Samples and cores were collected and archived from the drilling projects the Environmental Geology Division participated in. We hosted ***16*** visitors in the sample library during FY 2025. Ten of these geoscientists were from oil and gas companies, ***three*** were from academic institutions, and ***three*** were from the mining industry. Cores and cuttings representing ***47*** wells were requested. Staff pulled and restocked ***115*** boxes of cores and cuttings. The Division scanned 680 geophysical logs for oil and gas wells for which we had core and cutting samples. Scanned logs for our sample library holdings will be made available online. The Environmental Geology Division's Drilling Program drilled one hole in support of the USGS STATEMAP grant with the Surface Geology Division. It was drilled in FY2025 as a stratigraphic test hole and was cored to a depth of 100 feet then drilled to a total depth of ***270*** feet.



# Surface Geology

## *Geologic Mapping*

The Surface Geology Division's primary charge is the Geologic Mapping Program, which aims to map the entire state on 7.5-minute quadrangle sheets at a scale of 1:24,000. Visit mdeq.ms.gov to view completed digital maps or access the Office of Geology's Open-File Report series. Geologic maps are fundamental to characterizing the environment. Mapping at a 1:24,000 scale provides the detailed geologic information needed for environmental land-use decisions in municipal planning; to locate recharge areas for groundwater supplies; to locate mineral resources; to aid in pollution prevention and effective mitigation; to manage land and protect property from geologic hazards such as landslides, swelling clays, and floods; and to support academic research in ecology, paleontology, and archaeology.

The United States Geological Survey Mapping (STATEMAP) grant funded the geologic mapping program during fiscal year 2025. The STATEMAP component establishes the geologic framework of areas that are vital to the welfare of individual states. Each State Geologist determines the state's mapping priorities in consultation with a State Mapping Advisory Committee. These priorities are based on state requirements for geologic map information in areas of multiple issue needs or compelling single-issue needs and in areas where mapping is required to solve critical earth science problems.

### The Geologic Mapping program Published a total of six geologic maps in fiscal year 2025 funded under the USGS cooperative StateMap grant program:

- 7.5-minute Geologic Map of the Redwood Quadrangle Warren and Issaquena Counties
- 7.5-minute Geologic Map of the Vicksburg East Quadrangle Warren County
- 7.5-minute Geologic Map of the Vicksburg West Quadrangle Warren County
- 7.5-minute Geologic Map of the Bluff Lake Quadrangle Oktibbeha, Noxubee, and Winston Counties
- 1:130,000 scale Geologic Map of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Jackson, Harrison, and Hancock Counties
- 1:500,000 scale Geologic Map of the Mississippi River Alluvial Plain Bolivar, Washington, Sunflower, Leflore, Coahoma, Tunica, Tallahatchie, Issaquena, Sharkey, Humphreys, Quitman, Yazoo, Warren, Holmes, Adams, Panola, Wilkinson, Desoto, Carroll, Jefferson, Grenada, Claiborne, and Tate Counties

In FY 2025, ***30*** articles and ***11*** geologic maps were published. Eleven abstracts were published in the Mississippi Academy of Science Journal; two articles were published in the Mississippi Archeological Association Newletter; nine articles published in the Mississippi Geological Society Bulletin, three abstracts in the Geological Society of America; one manuscript in the European Journal of Taxonomy, one journal paper in Geosciences (MPDI); one journal paper in Research (SPJ); one abstract in the Botanical Society of America Journal; one abstract in the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology.

## Also published in FY 2025 were eleven geologic maps including:

- 7.5-minute Geologic map of the Redwood Quadrangle
- 7.5-minute Geologic map of Vicksburg East
- 7.5-minute Geologic map of Vicksburg West
- 7.5-minute Geologic map of Bluff Lake
- 7.5-minute Geologic map of Canton
- 7.5-minute Geologic map of Shoccoe
- 7.5-minute Geologic map of Sharon Southeast
- 7.5-minute Geologic map of Geologic Map of Bovina
- 1:130,000 scale Geologic Map of the Mississippi Gulf Coast
- 1:500,000 scale Geologic Map of the Mississippi River Alluvial Plain
- 1:500,000 scale Geologic map of the Native Lithic Materials of Mississippi

Surface Geology staff engaged the public through the MDEQ “Ask a Geologist” portal and weekly #FossilFriday posts on social media, some of which were reprinted in local and national news outlets. They also collaborated with state and federal agencies, universities, researchers, and consultants while conducting numerous public education and outreach programs across Mississippi.

Scan for more map resources.

# Mining and Reclamation

MDEQ's Office of Geology regulates all noncoal surface mines in the state as provided for in the Mississippi Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1977. This includes issuing surface mining permits and notices of exempt operations, inspecting permitted areas and complaints, overseeing the reclamation performed by operators, and enforcing the law as per the promulgated rules and regulations and Commission orders. Additionally, coal and lignite mines are regulated under the Mississippi Surface Coal Mining and Reclamation Law of 1979, with oversight of the program by the Federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement.

In fiscal year 2025, the Mining and Reclamation Division performed ***620*** inspections (of which ***40*** were bond release inspections), recommended to the Permit Board the issuance of ***11*** initial and 10 amended permits, and received ***31*** Notices of Exempt Operations (operations less than four acres in size). A total of ***2,246*** exempt operations are on file, covering approximately ***8,984*** acres. A total of ***1,631*** bonded acres were completely reclaimed because of the division's efforts to oversee reclamation. The state currently has ***561*** permits covering approximately ***36,967*** acres. The Office of Geology's Mining and Reclamation Division continues to update the mining database that provides valuable mining information in a GIS format so mining sites can be located and viewed by anyone using the online Mining Viewer.

The Mining and Reclamation Division provides the required Mine Safety and Health Administration training for mining operations in the state. MSHA regulations require New Miner Training as well as an eight-hour refresher training course be taught to all mine workers. In fiscal year 2025, the staff provided ***25*** New Mining and Annual Refresher Certifications.

The Mining and Reclamation Division continues to focus on the complexities of coal mine regulation. Mississippi has an industry-estimated five billion tons of surface mineable lignite, a low-grade coal ranked just below sub-bituminous coal. The Mississippi Lignite Mining Company is mining lignite at the Red Hills Mine in Choctaw County to supply fuel for an adjacent 440-megawatt mine-mouth power plant. The mine produces over ***3.5*** million tons of lignite per year and has a permitted ***6,090*** acres. This permit (MS-002) was initially issued in 1998 and was renewed in February 2017 for its fourth five-year return. The planned life of the mine is ***30*** years. In January of 2020, a new surface coal mining permit (MS-004) was issued to the Red Hills Mine for an additional ***4,190*** acres.

The Liberty Fuels, LLC mine permit (MS-003) in southwestern Kemper County was issued in

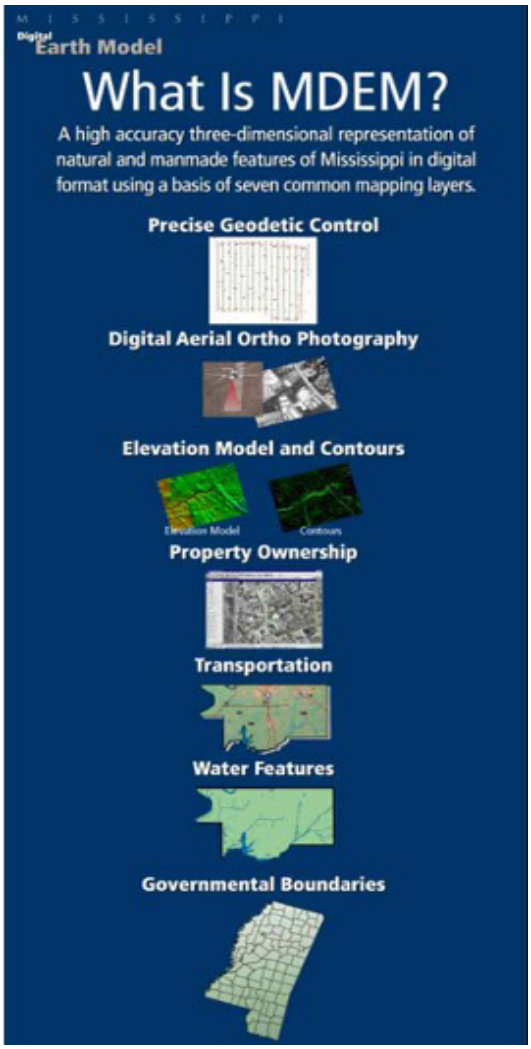
December 2011 for ***2,299*** acres. This permit was renewed in 2016. The Liberty Mine was to produce an average of ***2.2*** million tons of lignite per year for the initial five-year term, and ***4.5*** million tons per year for the planned 40-year life of mine. In 2017, Mississippi Power Company discontinued the coal gasification process and elected to operate the power plant exclusively on natural gas. In 2018, MDEQ approved a modification to the surface coal mining permit, fostering the reclamation of the site. Reclamation activities at the site were ongoing in fiscal year 2025 and will continue in fiscal year 2026.

Staff site inspections of all three surface coal mining permits are conducted at least monthly. One or more joint inspections of each mine are conducted annually with the Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation and Enforcement. It is anticipated that at least three applications for permit revisions will be submitted and at least two bond release applications are anticipated during fiscal year 2026.

Work under Mississippi's Abandoned Mine Land Program to identify and locate abandoned historic coal mines has identified ***four*** sites--two in Choctaw County and one each in Winston and Lauderdale counties. All these sites are believed to have been active sometime in the period from the mid to late 1800s to the late 1920s. Necessary reclamation work at the sites was completed in June 2018. In June 2020, another mine entrance was located in Winston County. This area was reclaimed in fiscal year 2022. In fiscal year 2024, the division shifted the focus to the reclamation of "non-coal" sites and a non-coal inventory was established. In fiscal year 2026, the program anticipates completed reclamation of AML sites on 16th Section lands in Covington and Simpson Counties.

## Geospatial Resources

The Geospatial Resources Division focuses on remote sensing and geographic information systems activities. The division supports development of the Mississippi Digital Earth Model and manages the Mississippi Flood Map Modernization Initiative and Risk MAP program.




*MDEM*

The MDEQ Office of Geology is charged with overall development of the MDEM, while the Geospatial Resources Division manages data development and data collection of the digital GIS layers for MDEM.

MDEM consists of seven layers of digital information: (1) geodetic control, (2) elevation and bathymetry, (3) orthoimagery, (4) hydrography, (5) transportation, (6) government boundaries, and (7) cadastral. The division is responsible for delivery of these datasets to the Mississippi Geospatial Clearinghouse and to MARIS for storage and distribution to public and private stakeholders. The division also supports MDEQ's activities involving its membership through the Mississippi Coordinating Council for Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems.

## The division maintains five Web sites and plans to add others. One site has oil and gas related information:

- Oil and gas related information: http://geology.deq.ms.gov/energy/
- Coastal data collected in previous years of research: https://geology.deq.ms.gov/coastal/
- The flood mapping program is at: http://geology.deq.ms.gov/floodmaps/
- The fourth website is the Mississippi Geothermal Resources website: http://geology.deq.ms.gov/geothermal/
- The final website is the MDEM website: https://www.mdeq.ms.gov/mdem/

** The division also provides support to the Office of Geology's GIS data needs.*

In addition, the division provides support to the Office of Geology for any GIS data needs and supports Information Technology Services by making MDEM data available through the Clearinghouse/Portal. Geospatial Resources also works with the Mississippi Automated Resource Information System to enhance public access and distribution. The division continues to manage development, collection, and review of local-resolution hydrography data, LiDAR elevation data, and development/production of 6-inch annual orthoimagery projects covering approximately one-third of the state each year, funding allowing.

*MFMMI/Risk MAP Program*

The division also manages the Mississippi Flood Map Modernization Initiative and the FEMA Risk MAP program, which create and maintain Federal Emergency Management Agency digital flood insurance rate maps (DFIRMs) for all 82 Mississippi counties, pending continued FEMA funding. In early 2025, the division had nine active HUC-8 watershed flood studies affecting portions of 49 counties and three Levee Analysis and Mapping Plan projects involving portions of six counties. Emphasis will continue to be placed on LiDAR data collection and coordination in partnership with state and federal agencies with common needs. With recent LiDAR deliveries, Mississippi now has 100% coverage of 0.7-meter QL2-quality LiDAR data, which is available for distribution through MARIS.

Scan for more information on the Office of Geology.

# Office of
# Community Engagement

**116**
Hosted or participated training courses
Addressing community concerns in the state.

**1815**
Disseminated communications.
In response to direct requests for environmental education.

**26**
Collaboration projects with other MDEQ offices dealing with community concerns.

**513**
Entered or responded calls.
Calls are managed through the agency's Compliant Tracking System.

The Office of Community Engagement helps communities better understand environmental programs and agency processes through education, outreach, and collaboration. OCE offers free workshops, easy-to-understand publications, and works closely with government partners, industry, and local organizations to support healthy, sustainable communities. Their focus on engagement and partnership ensures that individuals, groups, and potentially impacted industries can take an active role in environmental decision-making.

Scan for more information on the Office of Community Engagement.

# Small Business Environmental Assistance Program

The Small Business Environmental Assistance Program provides small businesses with clear guidance on environmental regulations, available programs, and helpful resources. The program continues to expand its outreach efforts to support businesses across the state and ensure they stay informed and compliant.

Each year, the SBEAP distributes the Dry Cleaner Compliance Calendar to facilities regulated under the Perchloroethylene Dry Cleaner Regulations. These Compliance Monitoring Calendars assist businesses in meeting required monitoring and record-keeping standards. In Mississippi, approximately ***45*** facilities fall under these regulatory requirements.

**52**

Responded to approximately 52 requests for permitting or compliance assistance and other general environmental information, across 12 different industries.

**80**

SBEAP participated in 80 national, regional, and local trainings

## National SBEAP 2025 Annual Training
## Salt Lake City, Utah • October 20 - 22, 2025

National Small Business Environmental Assistance Program

October 20-23, 2025, the MDEQ Small Business Environmental Assistance Program virtually attended the National Annual Training and networking event specifically for SBEAP professionals in Salt Lake City, UT. The Annual Training was a prime opportunity to share best practices, discuss emerging challenges, and enhance the SBEAP program's effectiveness as a group. For two and a half days, SBEAPs benefited from targeted sessions and invaluable peer-to-peer discussions. The annual training covered key program management strategies, outreach innovations, and policy updates relevant to our work. The annual training delivered valuable knowledge on adapting to socioeconomic shifts, integrating technology-driven solutions, and advancing environmental and regulatory practices. The information and insights gained will inform ongoing efforts to support small businesses, enhance operational efficiency, and promote sustainable growth across industries.

**MDEQ Office:**

Jackson, MS

**2025**

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This report is provided for informational purposes. The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality assumes no liability for errors or omissions.

Unless otherwise noted, all data are reported by state fiscal year.

An electronic version of this report is available on the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality website, mdeq.ms.gov.