



**Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Office of Pollution Prevention**

2024 Pollution Prevention Annual Report

Released December 2024

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Department of Environmental Quality supports its mission to protect and enhance the environment of Virginia in multiple ways. DEQ administers laws and regulations related to air quality, water quality, water supply, renewable energy, and land protection. In addition, DEQ has programs that encourage our customers to go beyond these regulatory requirements. The Office of Pollution Prevention (OPP) coordinates programs that aim to proactively address the environment, by avoiding environmental waste as opposed to managing it. These programs allow DEQ to recognize environmental leaders and demonstrate how DEQ can partner with our customers to improve the environment.

OPP coordinates incentive programs and assistance, as well as internal programs that allow DEQ to lead by example. A few highlights from 2024 include:

- Hosting a regional workshop to share pollution prevention best practices and support participants of the Virginia Environmental Excellence Program with networking opportunities, specifically a networking session with DEQ regulatory staff.
- Successfully competing for grant funding from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to support pollution prevention in the Commonwealth, including funding that will support two new programs focusing on auto-shops and reducing food waste.

DEQ will continue to work to protect Virginia's natural resources and OPP's programs will play a key role through programs that benefit businesses, institutions, communities, and our citizens. With the support of Governor Glenn Youngkin, OPP looks forward to continuing to promote cost effective pollution prevention initiatives and expanding on work to reduce food waste which supports Executive Order (EO) 17, "Recognizing the Value of Recycling and Waste Reduction."

Michael Rolband
Director, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality



VIRGINIA ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

The Virginia Environmental Excellence Program (VEEP) recognizes facilities that have demonstrated a commitment to enhanced environmental performance and encourages innovations in environmental management.



Since 2000, DEQ has promoted the non-regulatory VEEP as a mechanism to encourage “beyond-compliance” environmental results. VEEP provides recognition and incentives to facilities meeting the program requirements. There are two separate and distinct VEEP tracks: Sustainability Partners (SP) and the Environmental Management System (EMS) track.

VEEP SP is designed to encourage organizations to make environmental sustainability part of their culture through leadership, innovation, and continual improvement and provides recognition to members. An EMS is not a requirement to be an SP.



The **VEEP EMS** track has three levels of participation, all supplying recognition and other benefits such as permit fee discounts, a single point of contact at DEQ, and recognition. Each level of the EMS track builds on the previous level, requiring a more robust system to identify and address environmental risks. The three levels of participation for the VEEP EMS track are:



- **E2** (Environmental Enterprise) for facilities that have made significant progress toward the development of an EMS, have made a commitment to pollution prevention, and have a record of sustained compliance with environmental regulations.



- **E3** (Exemplary Environmental Enterprise) for facilities that have exceeded the E2 requirements and have a fully implemented EMS.



- **E4** (Extraordinary Environmental Enterprise) for facilities that have exceeded the E3 requirements, have completed at least one full cycle of an EMS as verified by a third-party auditor, and have demonstrated a commitment to continuous and sustainable environmental progress and community involvement.

OPP administers VEEP, which includes reviewing applications and renewals, performing site visits, coordinating compliance reviews, organizing recognition events, and providing educational resources. Throughout the year, OPP reviewed and provided comments on approximately 50 EMS track applications and 8 SP applications, representing over 300 Virginia facilities.

VIRGINIA ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

2024 VEEP HIGHLIGHTS

OPP works continuously to support, promote, and improve VEEP and its goals. This includes keeping program participants up to date, reaching out to potential new members, and improving internal systems to provide better support.

VEEP Member Highlights

This year, OPP staff worked with Luck Stone to streamline its VEEP Membership. Luck Stone, one of the longest standing VEEP members, started at the E2 level of VEEP and has steadily been transitioning facilities to the E3 level of the program. In 2024 Luck Stone consolidated all of its 34 entities in VEEP under one membership. In doing so all remaining E2 facilities were raised to the E3 level. This change will make renewing and reporting to the program much more efficient for both the company and OPP.

Data Management

VEEP has benefited from DEQ's technological advancements, including making annual VEEP reporting available through the myDEQ Portal. Last year DEQ upgraded its mapping and data aggregation capacity. VEEP was included into these upgrades and has improved abilities to map facilities and report data. Now VEEP, along with the rest of DEQ, is transitioning to a new data management system called Tableau. This change will continue to enhance OPP's ability to analyze the data it collects through VEEP reporting.

Pollution Prevention Resources

OPP continues to highlight P2 actions that show real world examples and identify successful technologies and techniques. OPP maintains a series of [Case Studies](#) that feature facilities that have implemented these P2 strategies. Additional P2 resources and efforts include:

- Facility-specific P2 guidance to organizations by request and during program-related site visits. Outreach can be done through site visits, virtual meetings, or connecting during in-person events. OPP staff participate in a variety of these outreach events each year including attending the Rivanna Environmental Management System Association's quarterly meetings, exhibiting at the Southwest Virginia Manufacturing Expo and at the Henrico Energy Fair, and providing one-on-one support to several potential and current VEEP members.
- To promote the VEEP SP, OPP hosted a webinar titled "Virginia Environmental Excellence Program Sustainability Partners Application Overview". This recorded event included a walk-through of the VEEP Sustainability Partners application, followed by an explanation of the value of the program from Jenny Boeder with Prince William County, a founding VEEP SP member. The recording was later used to advertise the program to prospective applicants.
- OPP hosted a VEEP Workshop at Laurel Ridge Community College on August 15 in DEQ's Northern Region, which was attended by approximately 45 people. The workshop included the

VIRGINIA ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

opportunity to network with DEQ regulators and learn from sessions on EMS auditing, climate, transportation, and outreach. Attendees also received an update on VEEP, including tips on reporting requirements and EMS development. In a survey following the event, 90% of respondents noted that the content was relevant and that they learned something that would improve their environmental programs. In 2024, OPP successfully competed for an EPA grant which will help fund additional workshops over the next two years.



DEQ's Northern Regional Office Director, Richard Doucette, welcomes participants to the VEEP workshop.



Trainer Harry Gregori led the group on a session about EMS Conformance Auditing, during which he shared strategies for getting the most out of your internal review process.



Graham Sheridan with Virginia Clean Cities discussed idling reduction, clean transportation options, and opportunities for federal grants.

Annual Permit Fee Discounts for VEEP Facilities

When legislation establishing annual permit fees for facilities was enacted, the General Assembly acknowledged that VEEP members “go beyond” compliance and determined that their improved environmental performance merited permit fee discounts. The discount varies by permit type and membership level as shown on the right.

The total discounts available for each media is capped at a fixed level and the discount received will drop if the total is exceeded. In 2024, VEEP members received discounts on 98 permits. The total member savings was approximately \$145,600.






VIRGINIA ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

Environmental Results

To remain in VEEP's EMS track, members must submit an annual progress report including detailed metrics. When applying for and renewing participation, facilities select from a list of more than 40 environmental indicators that they then use as the basis of their VEEP annual reporting. Members report results in both actual and normalized quantities (i.e., results based on product, number of employees, etc.). Normalized results allow facilities to better compare year-to-year performance. In their annual application, VEEP SP members also include quantifiable results using the same indicators.

VEEP EMS track members reported saving \$42.5 million through environmental efforts in 2023. Other environmental results are listed below.

Aggregate Annual VEEP Results		
		
Water use decreased by 258,398,509 gallons	Energy use decreased by 398,653 MMBtu	Waste disposed decreased by 6,042 tons

Results reported in 2024 are based on calendar year 2023 accomplishments. The overall program results, as presented above, are normalized and should be considered a general indication of VEEP facility performance because: (1) the program is voluntary and data is submitted by the facilities; (2) facilities may have limited experience tracking environmental results data; and (3) the aggregate results are a snapshot from one year and may not reflect overall reduction trends.

VIRGINIA GREEN TRAVEL

BACKGROUND

Virginia Green is the Commonwealth's voluntary initiative to promote P2 practices across all sectors of the tourism industry. Participating tourism businesses and organizations voluntarily commit to engage in P2 practices in the areas of waste reduction, water and energy conservation, and in the support of green events and meetings. OPP oversees development of programmatic guidance and requirements for membership. Coordination of the application review process, marketing, and promotion is done by DEQ's partners: the Virginia Green Travel Alliance (VGTA), the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC), Virginia State Parks, and the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging, and Travel Association.



VGTA, a fully-accredited 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, was created in 2014 to help promote Virginia Green and its partners. The VGTA processes all Virginia Green certification applications, promotes program partners on the VGTA website and social media outlets, and administers outreach efforts.

Run by the VGTA, the certification process is fee-based and includes two levels of participation. The fee structure was developed with input from tourism partners to ensure the program's accessibility to the entire travel and tourism sector, while providing the VGTA with funding to offset the cost of processing applications. The Commitment Level, Virginia Green's entry level, requires that a tourism business certify that it has made commitments to implement sustainable practices. Many businesses start at the Commitment Level and work towards being Fully-Certified. Fully-Certified Virginia Green Partners have implemented a required number of sustainable practices in various categories such as recycling and waste reduction, water and energy conservation, and green event management. Fully-Certified Partners submit an application that requires photographs and additional documentation of the green programs they have implemented.

To help connect members to green products, the Virginia Green Suppliers Network (VGSN) is maintained as a fee-based online directory of green service providers. The directory lists suppliers providing green services ranging from composting to transportation. The VGTA oversees the registration process and maintains the online listing of suppliers. VGSN members, in addition to selling green products and services, are required to commit to reducing environmental impacts.

2024 VIRGINIA GREEN HIGHLIGHTS:

OPP has maintained an active role in Virginia Green by continuing to provide technical resources and oversight of the certification standards. In addition, OPP is expanding its ability to provide technical assistance to individual tourism businesses as requested.

VIRGINIA GREEN TRAVEL

Virginia Green Resources

OPP has continued to work with the VGTA and other partners to promote the implementation of P2 initiatives and looks for opportunities where providing additional resources would increase implementation of green practices. VGTA and DEQ have hosted regular virtual Virginia Green Tourism Forums. This webinar series has featured environmental issues, opportunities, and success stories that affect Virginia's tourism industry. A list of the 2024 forums is below and recordings of all previous forums are posted on the OPP website. More forums are scheduled for the coming months to discuss the Virginia Green rebranding as well as implementation tips for Virginia's Foam Ban.



- [Beyond the Basics: What You Need to Know About Recycling](#)
 - Featuring Ryan Sanders with Busch Gardens
- [Partnering with Virginia State Parks to Support Outdoor Recreation and Sustainable Tourism](#)
 - Featuring Nancy Heltman with Virginia State Parks
- [From Butts to Benches: Cigarette Litter Prevention Opportunities](#)
 - Featuring Tracey Levery with Keep Virginia Beautiful
- [Electric Vehicle Amenities and Clean Transportation Opportunities](#)
 - Featuring Alleyn Harned and Matt Wade with Virginia Clean Cities

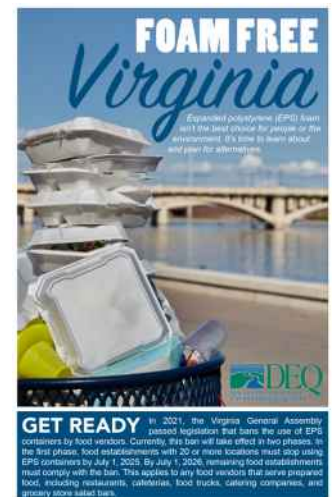


Expanded Polystyrene Ban Awareness

In 2021, the General Assembly passed legislation banning food vendors from using expanded polystyrene (EPS) food service containers. The effective dates have changed since the bill was originally passed. Currently, the ban is to take effect in two phases:

- July 1, 2025 for food establishments with 20 or more locations, and
- July 1, 2026 for remaining food establishments.

Through Virginia Green, OPP has been working with DEQ's Land Division to raise awareness of the upcoming requirement to transition away from EPS containers. Virginia Green members are an excellent resource, since all members have already committed to be foam-free establishments. As the effective dates get closer, OPP will continue to provide targeted resources to assist with the transition.



VIRGINIA GREEN TRAVEL

Brewery Outreach

Funded in part by a grant from EPA, OPP has continued its outreach targeted at breweries. This outreach aims to increase recognition of green breweries in Virginia and highlight successful practices that reduce pollution while lowering costs. OPP has partnered with the VGTA to visit breweries, document best practices, and provide feedback on improving environmental performance. Follow up on this feedback includes reminders on potential resources available to brewers and actionable items to help improve environmental performance. Currently, OPP is working with 14 breweries.

As part of this effort, on September 17, OPP and VTGA presented on the brewery outreach efforts at the Virginia Brewers Conference hosted by Craft Beer Professionals in Richmond, Virginia. Approximately 20 brewers attended the session focused on discussing the project, highlighting common P2 recommendations, and promoting Virginia Green membership, which is free to participating breweries.



On March 27, 2024, Keith Boisvert with OPP accompanied by Tom Griffin with the Virginia Green Travel Alliance visited New Realm Brewing to review environmental sustainability efforts and successes on-site and provide feedback and suggestions on other environmental sustainability opportunities.

Annual Virginia Green Conference and Awards Ceremony



April 17, 2024 | Pocahontas State Park

The eleventh annual Virginia Green Travel Conference and Travel Star Awards Ceremony was held at Pocahontas State Park in Chesterfield on April 17. The event focused on the importance of outdoor recreation and sustainable tourism. The conference and awards were co-hosted by Virginia State Parks. Tourism professionals from across the Commonwealth gathered to discuss sustainable solutions that promote outdoor recreation, protect Virginia's environment, and increase local and regional tourism. The Honorable Travis Voyles, Secretary of Natural & Historic Resources was a featured speaker for the day.



The Virginia Green Travel Star award winners were announced during the conference. This year, nine Virginia tourism operations received the program's highest award level, the Virginia Green Travel Star Award. Nine additional tourism businesses were recognized with a Virginia Green

VIRGINIA GREEN TRAVEL

Travel Leader Award for their continued environmental stewardship, four businesses received honorable mentions, two individuals received the Green Team All-Star Award for their leadership of their organization's green efforts, and one individual was recognized with an Industry Game Changer lifetime award.

Planning is underway for the 2025 conference and awards. The awards application will continue to emphasize providing data to document the benefits of the programs being implemented.

Highlights from the Virginia Green Travel Awards



Old Bust Head Brewing Company

GREEN BREWERY OF THE YEAR

Old Bust Head Brewing Company has a commitment to the environment that is both global and local. Their efforts are both large-scale, with energy saving investments, and small-scale, with actions based on environmental awareness and individual choices. The brewery has a 100KW solar array generating enough power to run 40% of their brewing operations. The brewery also installed a carbon dioxide (CO₂) recapture system in their production line, which keeps CO₂ out of the atmosphere and converts it for use in brewing operations.



**John Paul Jones Arena
Waste Reduction Through Green Games**

INNOVATIVE GREEN PROJECT

Since 2010, UVA has been working to reduce waste at football and basketball games. Beginning in the 2022 football season, UVA expanded this program to make every home football game a Green Game, with the help of both Sustainability Student Employees as well as student volunteers. The program was extended to include two men's basketball games and two women's basketball games in the spring at John Paul Jones Arena. UVA's Green Games are part of the UVA Sustainability 2020-2030 plan.

GOVERNOR'S ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

BACKGROUND

The Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards recognize successful and innovative efforts that improve Virginia's environment. The awards program is run annually by DEQ in partnership with the Department of Conservation and Recreation. There are four broad categories of awards: Program, Project, Land Conservation, and Implementation of the Virginia Outdoors Plan.



GOLD MEDAL WINNERS

Cabinetworks Group Inc. – Solvent Reclamation Program

Environmental & Sustainability Project

Cabinetworks Group Inc. (Cabinetworks) manufactures kitchen cabinets for over 20 brands. The Group's Mount Jackson facility initiated a Solvent Reclamation Program to address environmental concerns and enhance sustainability in cabinet staining and finishing. Cabinetworks partnered with another company, Blue Ridge Solvents and Coatings, to implement two key strategies. They adjusted solvent composition, reducing VOC content by 25%, and introduced a solvent recycling program, converting hazardous waste into reclaimed solvent through distillation. The project reduced reliance on virgin solvent by an impressive 51%, contributing to decreased raw material consumption.



Church & Dwight Co., Inc. – Removal of Ammonia and Phosphorus From Condom Manufacturing Process

Environmental & Sustainability Project

The Church & Dwight Co., Inc. (Church & Dwight) facility in South Chesterfield launched an environmental project in 2016 with the goal of minimizing the environmental impact of condom manufacturing. For years, Church & Dwight worked to reduce the amount of ammonia and phosphorus used in production. Changing the process required significant monitoring and quality assurance. By the end of 2022, the facility had fully transitioned to an ammonia and phosphorus-free chemistry. This transition saved the facility approximately 100,000 to 200,000 pounds of ammonia and 204,000 pounds of phosphorus-based chemical processing annually.



GOVERNOR'S ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

MYR Energy Services, Inc. / DESRI / Nevados – Bartonsville Energy Facility Environmental & Sustainability Project

MYR Energy Services, Inc. (MYRE), in partnership with D.E. Shaw Renewable Investments (DESRI), designed a 130-megawatt solar facility called Bartonsville Energy Facility in Frederick County. The project's location at the foot of the Appalachian Mountains brought challenging rolling terrain. This was addressed by designing the solar array to use Nevados all-terrain trackers that adapt to the terrain using articulated joints, the technology's first time being used in Virginia. Using Nevados reduced the need for extensive grading by allowing the solar panels to follow the natural curves of the landscape. In doing so, the partners were able to minimize soil disturbance and preserve topsoil during construction. Following the existing terrain also reduced the project's need for steel piling by 23%. Its emphasis on innovation is evident through its pioneering use of technology and construction methods. The facility is projected to contribute approximately 284,700 MWh of clean energy to Virginia annually after coming online in late 2024.



Patrick Henry's Red Hill, Ward Burton Wildlife Foundation, and Virginia Outdoors Foundation – Red Hill – Patrick Henry National Memorial

Virginia Outdoors Plan Implementation

The Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation placed a permanent open-space easement on Red Hill, the home of Patrick Henry, the first Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The easement resulted in 600-acres being preserved through the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. The conservation easement is intended to protect the historic and open space qualities of the property, fund additional interpretation of existing historic elements while enabling the installation of several new historic interpretive elements. Red Hill is open to the public 362 days per year, providing substantial outreach and education to both youth and adults and receives over 10,000 visitors each year. The preservation of Patrick Henry's Red Hill was made possible through the partnership of the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation, the Ward Burton Wildlife Foundation, Virginia Outdoors Foundation, and Beechtree Group with funding from the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation and Preservation Trust Fund.



RTX – Raytheon Sustainability

Environmental & Sustainability Program

Raytheon, a major business unit within RTX, operates primarily at the Dulles site, where it plays a crucial role in software development and manages the Chesapeake depot, specializing in the overhaul and repair of the Military AEGIS missile defense system. Raytheon places a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability, adhering to RTX's corporate policies, and has implemented a broad range of projects to reduce its environmental impacts. They have successfully reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 15% over the past five years and have decreased water usage by 10% through comprehensive water balance assessments. Water conservation efforts include completing an annual water balance, low-flow fixtures, and HVAC upgrades reducing the usage of the evaporating towers. Raytheon also achieved a 20% reduction in waste generation by prioritizing the waste hierarchy: reduce, reuse, and recycle.



GOVERNOR'S ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

SILVER MEDAL WINNERS

Capital Region Land Conservancy – New Market Heights Battlefield – Haskins Tract

Land Conservation

The Capital Region Land Conservancy (CRLC) acquired the Haskins Tract, 49-acres of land within the core area of New Market Heights Battlefield in eastern Henrico. The project was made possible using funding from the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation and the American Battlefield Protection Program. The tract specifically supports ConserveVirginia's goals to protect cultural and historic preservation, improve water quality, and preserve scenic landscapes.



Prince William County Department of Public Works & Micron Technology, Inc. – Neabsco Creek Bandalong Litter Trap: Controlling Urban Stormwater Litter

Environmental & Sustainability Project

The Neabsco Creek Bandalong project is a response to the pressing environmental issue of urban stormwater litter and plastic pollution. This pioneering collaboration between the Prince William County Department of Public Works, Micron Technology, Inc., (Micron) and local environmental non-profit organizations aims to control litter and plastic pollution from a 10,000-acre drainage area. In just two years, the project has resulted in the recycling of approximately 8,000 single-use #1 and #2 plastic bottles, diverting them from the estuary.



Rappahannock Regional Solid Waste Management Board (R-Board) / Aquia Harbour Host Lions Club – Electronics Recycling Program

Environmental & Sustainability Project

The Rappahannock Regional Solid Waste Management Board (R-Board) and Aquia Harbour Host Lions Club partnered to create an Electronics Recycling Program. The program is dedicated to reducing electronic waste in Fredericksburg and Stafford County by offering convenient recycling collection at the landfill. This partnership focuses on recycling or refurbishing residential electronics. Since its inception, the program has steadily expanded, diverting over 48,960 pounds of electronic waste from landfills through October of 2023 and saving almost \$52,000 in recycling costs.



Tech 4 Troops – T4T Responsibly Recycling Environmental Program

Environmental & Sustainability Project

At Tech for Troops (T4T), part of its core mission is responsible electronics recycling. Based in Richmond, T4T collects used electronics to be refurbished for Veterans and their families. All refurbished computers either go to veterans, are sold online, or are responsibly recycled, contributing to a circular economy. All equipment is recycled through R2 certified companies to ensure the recyclers follow responsible practices. The organization worked to ensure that both state and federal agencies were allowed to surplus computers through T4T. To date, T4T has recycled 800 tons of electronic waste, with a goal of recycling 100 tons annually through public support.



GOVERNOR'S ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The Lee Family - Pierces Low Grounds, LLC

Land Conservation

The Pierces Low Ground tract, located in Bryants Corner near Emporia, comprises 2,818 acres that have been permanently protected through the partnership of the Lee family, Rock Springs Forestry, The Nature Conservancy, the US Endowment for Forestry, Enviva, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, and Beechtree Group. The land is crucial for water quality, with riparian protection zones to reduce pollution in the Meherrin River, an impaired water body. The tract also hosts significant wildlife, including threatened bird species and a scenic riverfront with old-growth cypress-tupelo swamp trees.



BRONZE MEDAL WINNERS

The Drexel-Morrell Center – Belmead on the James, Inc.

Land Conservation

Belmead on the James, Inc. (BOJI) recently acquired the historic Drexel-Morrell Center property in Powhatan County, known for its rich cultural history. This property is now safeguarded by a perpetual historic preservation and open-space easement held by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources. Its focus is on preserving the history of African Americans in the region and honoring Saint Katharine Drexel's contributions.



Danville Utilities – Energy Efficiency Grant Program through the American Rescue Plan Act & Home\$ave Rebate Program

Environmental & Sustainability Program

Danville Utilities began its energy efficiency effort with the Home\$ave Rebate Program, which aims to promote environmental sustainability and energy efficiency among homeowners. Danville Utilities then expanded to its Energy Efficiency Grant Program, which focused on those most in need.



HONORABLE MENTION

Fairfax Department of Public Works and Environmental Services – Solid Waste Management Program – I Recycle: Bus Shelter Ad Project

Environmental & Sustainability Project

University of Virginia – Facilities Management Fleet – Safe and Sustainable Driver Training Program

Environmental & Sustainability Project

DEQ LEADING THE GREENING OF STATE GOVERNMENT

BACKGROUND

DEQ embraces its role as a leader in the greening of state government. By continually looking for ways to reduce our own environmental footprint, we can encourage others to do the same. Continuous environmental improvement is part of our day-to-day decision-making. From the programs OPP runs to the way DEQ does business, protecting and enhancing Virginia's environment is our core mission. OPP leads by example, creates tools for others to use, and actively seeks to provide technical assistance to agencies interested in implementing similar efforts. DEQ uses an EMS to evaluate the environmental impacts of our operations to increase recycling and waste diversion. By understanding our own environmental impacts, we are better equipped to provide outreach to encourage state employees to recycle, reduce waste, and increase their sustainability efforts.

DEQ'S ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Background

OPP is integral in the ongoing implementation of DEQ's EMS; with the goal of not only reducing DEQ's environmental footprint, but also engaging employees in the day-to-day awareness and decision-making that is a cornerstone of environmental management. DEQ is leading by example as it strives to continually improve the EMS and environmental awareness at its facilities across the state.



The Agency-wide EMS Team meets quarterly to discuss ways to enhance environmentally sound practices, increase environmental awareness through annual training, increase communication of mutually beneficial knowledge, and encourage innovative environmental solutions. Annual awareness events are planned for Earth Day in April and America Recycles Day in November to increase discussion about the EMS Team's efforts. These awareness events serve as a crucial way to engage with DEQ staff

on the importance of protecting the environment through actions at home as well as at work. These efforts go hand-in-hand with our mission of protecting and enhancing Virginia's environment and promoting the health and well-being of the citizens of the Commonwealth.

Objectives & Targets

Since 2014, the EMS Team has implemented numerous objectives and targets to address risks identified by annual reviews of the agency's environmental aspects and impacts. Seventeen of the 18 objectives and targets implemented to date have been completed. Some of these completed

DEQ LEADING THE GREENING OF STATE GOVERNMENT

objectives remain ongoing to continually improve efforts like reducing energy use, increasing green purchasing, and greening DEQ meetings and events. The EMS Team will continue to implement action plans to maintain these goals.

The EMS Team also provides an annual EMS Awareness Training to all employees about the Agency's priorities and progress on environmental goals. Increasing environmental awareness is an important part of encouraging employees to assess the daily decisions they make that impact the environment.

Results

Each year, DEQ's EMS Team compiles an annual report for the DEQ Leadership Team on P2 and EMS efforts. The 2023 report showed that DEQ's electricity consumption was down 3.5% from 2022. The Agency's print totals were up in 2023 with more employees back in the office full time, but the EMS Team has taken an active role in working to decrease printing across the agency. Beneficial programs like recycling and local cleanups continue and DEQ's Central Office started a composting pilot program in 2024 to divert food waste from landfills. The EMS Team is committed to encouraging employees to find ways to reduce their environmental impact and embrace green practices both at the office and at home.



DEQ staff use separate organics buckets to collect compostable waste from office kitchenettes. The material is collected weekly by NOPE Compost Co. and brought to an industrial compost facility.

RECOGNIZING THE VALUE OF RECYCLING AND WASTE REDUCTION

Background

OPP continues to support Governor Youngkin's EO 17, which includes three areas for DEQ to encourage recycling: supporting the Department of General Services efforts to encourage recycling at state agencies, coordinating with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership to identify opportunities to attract businesses that use post-consumer recycled content, and partnering with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to identify ways to reduce food waste.

Stopping Food Waste

Efforts to reduce food waste follow the food management hierarchy, with the most preferred strategies being to reduce the amount of food waste, donate extra food to feed people, and divert food scraps to animal feed. Additional resources are available on [DEQ's webpage](#). Over the last year, OPP has focused on this element of EO 17. Although food waste reduction was incorporated into many outreach opportunities, two events in particular focused on sharing information about food waste. One

DEQ LEADING THE GREENING OF STATE GOVERNMENT

was a presentation for a local Boys & Girls Club and the other was a virtual presentation during Food Waste Prevention week.

OPP looks forward to expanding food waste reduction and diversion efforts next year. OPP partnered with other divisions within the agency to successfully compete for Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Implementation funding. OPP will use a portion of this funding (\$9.6 million) to promote outreach around strategies to reduce food waste and to provide funding through subawards Virginia universities and/or agencies to implement food waste reduction and diversion programs. The CPRG will provide funding to DEQ for 5-years, which will include support for an additional staff person to focus on food rescue and diversion and provide 3-years of subawards to 15-20 partners. This funding will provide OPP the opportunity to help partners implement the strategies laid out in the EO 17.

Recommendations from the EO 17 Report on Food Waste Reduction Strategies that will be directly supported through the CPRG funding include:

Reduce Wasted Food:

Recommendation: The most preferred strategy for food waste prevention is source reduction, or reducing the volume of surplus food generated. Implementing steps such as monitoring food waste, inventorying supplies, modifying menus, ensuring proper storage and being creative with excess foods can be implemented by the large-scale suppliers of food identified in EO 17. All large-scale suppliers of food in the Commonwealth should consider incorporating or expanding their food waste prevention strategies in their operations.

Donate Extra Food:

Recommendation: All large-scale suppliers of food in the Commonwealth should consider donations of the following food items:

- Products that are unsellable due to product imperfections or stock issues
- Commercially packaged non-perishable foods
- Perishable foods
- Commercially packaged products that have time/temperature controls for safety of the foods
- Excess prepared cold and cooked foods

Composting:

Recommendations: Large-scale food suppliers in Virginia should consider their on-site and off-site composting options.

RESOURCES

General Information

www.deq.virginia.gov/our-programs/pollution-prevention

Virginia Green Tourism Program

www.deq.virginia.gov/our-programs/pollution-prevention/virginia-green

www.virginia.org/green/

www.virginiagreen.net

Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards Program

www.deq.virginia.gov/our-programs/pollution-prevention/governor-s-environmental-excellence-awards

Pollution Prevention Case Studies

www.deq.virginia.gov/our-programs/pollution-prevention/case-studies

Virginia Environmental Excellence Program

www.deq.virginia.gov/our-programs/pollution-prevention/virginia-environmental-excellence-program

Virginia Information Source for Energy

www.deq.virginia.gov/our-programs/pollution-prevention/virginia-information-source-for-energy

Executive Order Seventeen

www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/eo/EO-17-Recognizing-The-Value-of-Recycling-and-Waste-Reduction.pdf

www.deq.virginia.gov/our-programs/pollution-prevention/executive-order-17/stopping-food-waste

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