



UTAH DEPARTMENT *of*
**ENVIRONMENTAL
QUALITY**

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

2021-2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Utah's natural environment, our unmatched landscapes, access to world class recreation, and overall high quality of life have attracted new businesses and families to our state. This, in turn, has had a positive impact on our economy.

Proactively protecting our most valuable resources is critical to our future as we experience rapid growth, more extreme weather events, a longer wildfire season, and prolonged droughts that impact our water quality and airshed. Utah's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) plays an important role in preserving Utah's quality of life.

Governor Cox has laid out a clear vision in his One Utah Road Map. DEQ supports his vision in this strategic action plan that sets specific goals and objectives to deliver tangible outcomes over the next four years.

DEQ has identified three strategic focus areas and corresponding steps

1 Protect and promote sustainable growth

2 Build more resilience to climate change by investing in the infrastructure for rural communities

3 Modernize our regulatory interface to be more customer focused and business friendly

1 DEQ will take meaningful action to combat poor air quality, help restore previously contaminated sites for development, and reverse the trend of degrading water quality to promote sustainable growth in Utah.

Supports the One Utah Road Map: Economic Advancement, Sustainable Growth Promotion

GOAL 1.1. ENSURE CLEAN AND SAFE WATER FOR ALL UTAH COMMUNITIES

- Incremental improvements in water quality to support all beneficial uses including fishing, swimming, drinking, and agricultural irrigation for crops and livestock use.
- Mechanical wastewater treatment plants on track for upgrades appropriate for the age of the facility. Total pollution loading to State waters from wastewater and septic systems reduced through improved wastewater infrastructure.
- Children protected from lead in drinking water in schools and childcare facilities through testing and remediation.
- Increased capacity and resiliency of Utah's drinking water systems to allow for smart, sustainable growth.
- Greater compliance with drinking water standards through effective communication, active outreach, and on-site assistance.

GOAL 1.2. ENSURE CLEAN AND HEALTHY AIR FOR ALL UTAHNS

- Effective monitoring and related studies to tailor solutions to areas impacted by poor air quality.
- Area stakeholders involved in generating information and developing regional solutions.

GOAL 1.3. CLEAN UP AND RESTORE LAND FOR PRODUCTIVE USES AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES WHILE WORKING TO PREVENT FUTURE CONTAMINATION

- Work with local communities to introduce available tools such as the Brownfields Program to identify, assess, restore, and redevelop eligible sites for beneficial reuse through the Voluntary Cleanup Program.
- Implement preventative measures through outreach, permitting, and compliance follow-up and assistance.

GOAL 1.3. PROVIDE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSISTANCE TO SMALL BUSINESSES IN UTAH

- Help small businesses navigate environmental regulations to help keep Utah a clean and safe place to live and do business by offering pre-design assistance meetings in person or virtually.

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DEQ will support programs and investments that prioritize rural Utah while focusing on technical assistance to rural communities in meeting complex federal regulations.

Supports the One Utah Road Map: Rural Matters, Rural Infrastructure

GOAL 2.1. SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS THAT DIRECTLY BENEFIT RURAL UTAH

- Agricultural VIP program expanded to further protect water quality in rural areas by incentivizing agricultural producers to adopt water wise practices.
- Above ground storage tank (AST) legislation implemented, thereby insulating small businesses from financial hardship and reducing pollution from potential leaks through outreach and compliance assistance that primarily impact rural communities.
- District engineer model expanded and support of local environmental health programs in rural Utah increased.
- Positions in rural communities strategically filled to carry out DEQ compliance and technical assistance functions.
- Continued promotion of the Small Business Environmental Assistance Program (SBEAP) in rural communities to advocate for and help small businesses navigate permits and the regulatory rules for their industry.

GOAL 2.2. INVEST IN RURAL DRINKING WATER & WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

- Recapitalize revolving loan funds that provide low cost loans or grants to local municipalities to invest in rural drinking and wastewater systems.
- ARPA funds and other federal grants leveraged to benefit new sewer investment in rural communities.

GOAL 2.3. DEQ WILL SEEK TO ACHIEVE COMPLIANCE WITH ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS THROUGH EDUCATION & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FIRST BEFORE FORMAL ENFORCEMENT IS PURSUED

- Positions established in the Division of Drinking Water that are focused on ensuring small, rural drinking water systems have safe and reliable drinking water.
- The development of a statewide water quality index built around priority pollutants and applied to priority waters.



DEQ will invest in modernizing our tools, databases, and systems to be more customer-focused, reduce redundancy, improve consistency, and enhance our ability to make timely data-driven decisions.

Supports the One Utah Road Map: Streamline and Modernize State Government, Implement a state government structure that maximizes operational efficiencies and public services

GOAL 3.1. UPDATE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS TO BE MORE RESPONSIVE FOR OUR CUSTOMERS WITH TRANSPARENT, TIMELY PERMITTING AND COMPLIANCE ACTIONS

- The creation of a department-wide technology planning map that prioritizes the creation or purchase of cross-division enterprise solutions.
- Division of Air Quality legacy systems such as the TEMPO database replaced with a relational database that can better predict future regulatory activity.
- 90% of documents processed electronically by 2024.
- Processes and procedures established that allow the regulated community to submit required documents electronically to all Divisions.
- Upgraded oil/gas inventory submission process and database.
- Technology solutions that support a modern, mobile workforce to allow us to be more adaptive and responsive to communities, customers, and other government agencies.

GOAL 3.2. DEQ'S REGULATORY APPROACH, INCLUDING ENFORCEMENT, IS CONSISTENT & TRANSPARENT TO STAKEHOLDERS

- Promote compliance through education and technical assistance.
- Proactive engagement with our customers and stakeholders to seek feedback and improve our work.
- Provide access to public records for the entire department through our [Easy Records Search and Interactive Map](#).
- Adopt technology that assists with creating defensible decisions using accurate, reliable data with quality science.
- Provide online access to information about permitting and licensing actions to ensure the opportunity for public participation in the process.
- Publically share [metrics](#) to inform the public on DEQ's progress.



OUR VISION

Clean air, land and water for a healthy and prosperous Utah.

OUR MISSION

Safeguarding and improving Utah's air, land and water through balanced regulation.

OUR VALUES

EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE We are public servants committed to the people of Utah and our customers. We solve problems, actively engage stakeholders, and are professional, responsive and fair.

COMMITMENT TO EMPLOYEES We value our dedicated employees as our greatest asset. We treat each other with respect, foster professional development and celebrate our individual and collective contributions.

CREDIBILITY & TRUST We earn the public's trust by showing we care, demonstrating expertise in our work, and basing our decisions on science and the law. We act with integrity and make accurate and reliable information accessible to the public.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT We are accountable for taxpayer dollars. We improve our performance and implement innovations that advance quality, efficiency and effectiveness.

PRINCIPLES OF OUR WORK

We are dedicated to environmental stewardship and protecting public health, while also recognizing the importance of supporting conditions that foster economic growth.

We are problem solvers who are solutions oriented. We believe that there is a Utah Way where business can thrive and human health and the environment are protected.

We are collaborative team players working in partnership with stakeholders, businesses, local, state, tribal and federal entities to protect Utah's environment.