

Celebrating 25 Years

DEQ Turns 25

In his 1990 State of the State address, Governor Norm Bangerter proposed the formation of a Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The late Sen. Steve Rees sponsored the bill that created DEQ—officially inaugurated on July 1, 1991—with the mission of “safeguarding human health and quality of life by protecting and enhancing the environment.”

Ken Alkema became the first director of DEQ, to be replaced by Dianne Nielson who served 18 years under Governors Mike Leavitt, Olene Walker, and Jon Huntsman Jr. When Huntsman appointed Nielson as his Energy Advisor, Rick Sprott took the helm, retiring a year later, with Deputy Director Bill Sinclair as Interim Director until Amanda Smith was appointed in 2009, serving six years. In 2015, Governor Gary Herbert appointed Alan Matheson as DEQ’s fifth executive director.

Throughout the years, DEQ’s five divisions – Air Quality, Waste Management and Radiation Control, Environmental Response and Remediation, Water Quality and Drinking Water – have played key roles in protecting and enhancing Utah’s environment.

We showcase “success stories” achieved by DEQ’s dedicated workforce, committed to improving Utah’s environment.



“A healthy environment is essential to Utah’s future. To be short-sighted in our management of the environment is to short-change the next generation. In order to highlight the importance of this issue and in the interest of expediting the resolution of the many environmental issues facing the state, I am requesting the creation of a Department of Environmental Quality.”

—Governor Norm Bangerter

1991-2016



UTAH DEPARTMENT of
**ENVIRONMENTAL
QUALITY**