

**Date:** Nov. 2, 2023

**To:** Environmental Quality Commission

**From:** Leah Feldon, Director

**Subject:** Agenda item B, Informational item: Strategic Planning Update  
Nov. 16-17, 2023, EQC meeting

**Why this is important** DEQ will inform and update the commission on the process for developing a new strategic plan, grounded in principles of antiracism and equity. This plan is due to the Governor by June 2024.

**Background** In mid-2022, DEQ re-initiated a process to develop a strategic plan. This work is currently being led by the following DEQ team members:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Matthew Davis, Policy and External Affairs Manager       | Lydia Emer, Land Quality Division Administrator       |
| Harry Esteve, Communications Manager (ret.)              | Smita Mehta, Interim Eastern Region Watershed Manager |
| Oscar Orejel, Senior CWSRF Loan Specialist               | Jen Persons, Executive Support Specialist             |
| Becka Puskas, Environmental Law Specialist               | Nicole Singh, Senior Climate Policy Advisor           |
| Jamila Thompson, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Analyst | Lauren Wirtis, Communications Manager                 |

With the assistance of a project manager, Sue Langston, and consultants, Engage to Change, the strategic planning team is committed to rooting our strategic plan – and the process to develop it – in concepts of antiracism, anti-oppression and equity. This is a significant difference from the way this work has typically been done at DEQ.

DEQ’s regulations and programs impact people and the places they live, work and play. That includes inside DEQ office buildings and people’s at-home workstations out to every corner of the state. Rooting this plan and the process in antiracism means we start with the people and places most impacted to

develop our solutions, understanding that a one-size-fits-all solution will leave historically marginalized communities behind. If DEQ is not serving the most vulnerable among us, then we cannot succeed at meeting our mission.

The first year of the committee's work centered around collective learning and examination of the features of white dominant culture that exist and persist within DEQ, and how that affects the agency's people and work. The group has also worked to establish shared agreements in the committee around decision-making and collaboration.

Moving forward, the work of the committee will focus on developing a draft plan based on the following key inputs:

- Leveraging the skill, wisdom, and expertise of groups throughout the agency, with a focus on Black, Indigenous and People of Color, and other marginalized communities;
- Expectations and resources provided by the Governor's Office in support of meeting Governor Kotek's expectation that all agencies have an updated plan by June 2024;
- An Environmental Scan conducted by the Berry Dunn consulting firm, in preparation for this strategic planning process;
- Invited input from the nine recognized Tribes of Oregon;
- DEQ's Organizational Assessment, prepared by Engage to Change; and
- Consultation with the Environmental Quality Commission

As part of the process the committee expects to evaluate and update the current mission statement, and work to develop a vision statement, values, and strategic goals.

**EQC  
involvement**

Commission members were interviewed as part of the Environmental Scan conducted in 2021 as one part of this planning process.

Moving forward, the planning team expects to consult with the Commission in the development and finalization of the strategic plan.

*Report prepared by the Strategic Planning Team*

**Translation or other formats**

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