

Department of Natural Resources and Environment **Frequently Asked Questions**

What is the new Department of Natural Resources and Environment?

On October 8, 2009, Governor Granholm issued Executive Order 2009-45, creating the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) with a mission to protect and conserve Michigan's air, water and other natural resources. The Executive Order becomes effective January 17, 2010. The new department will assume the powers and functions of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), which are abolished by the Executive Order, also effective January 17, 2010. Executive Order 2009-54 provided further direction regarding the new department.

What is the DNRE's mission?

The DNRE's mission is to conserve, manage, protect and promote Michigan's environmental, natural resource and related economic interests for current and future generations. The department is charged with the responsibility to:

- Implement an ecosystem-based strategy for resource management aimed at protecting and enhancing the sustainability, diversity and productivity of the state's natural resources;
- Provide for continuous improvement of Michigan's air, water and soils while facilitating and encouraging economic growth;
- Facilitate the use and protection of Michigan's natural resources in a sustainable manner;
- Preserve Michigan's rich outdoor heritage;
- Provide quality and accessible public outdoor recreation;
- Restore the Great Lakes and other degraded natural systems to ensure resiliency and sustainability; and
- Promote stewardship of Michigan's natural and cultural resources through education, awareness and action.

What will be in place on January 17?

The DNRE will have a new director, placement of several key managers, and an interim structure for the new department. Existing DNR and DEQ programs will continue to serve the people of Michigan, deliver quality programs, and responsibly manage the state's natural and environmental resources.

What role did the Transition Manager play in creating the new department?

Bruce Rasher, as Transition Manager prepared the report that was submitted to the Governor, which provided recommendation on the structure of the new department and changes to facilitate the department being responsive to the needs of the citizens and businesses of this state. The Governor has accepted the recommendations and charged the DNRE with implementing the recommendations of the report.

What happens after January 17?

While the DNRE is a new department with a new mission and vision, it assumed program responsibilities from the DNR and DEQ. These program responsibilities will continue under the management of the DNRE. Department management will however, immediately prioritize programs and processes for reengineering Working with input from employees and stakeholders, the management team will determine the most effective and efficient way to meet the DNRE's mission in a transparent manner.

What happens to the Natural Resources Commission and other DNR and DEQ boards and commissions?

The Commission of Natural Resources is transferred to the DNRE and renamed the Natural Resources Commission. The Commission retains its authority to regulate the taking of game and other duties as prescribed by law. The NRC will also advise the director on natural resources and conservation issues. In addition:

- The Michigan Trailways Advisory Council and the Michigan Snowmobile Advisory Committee are abolished. Their functions are transferred to a new nine-member Michigan Snowmobile and Trails Advisory Council within the DNRE that will advise the governor and DNRE director on creating, developing, operating and maintaining motorized and non-motorized trails in Michigan.
- The Site Review Board is abolished and its functions transferred to the DNRE.
- The Citizens Committee for Michigan State Parks and the Water Resources Conservation Advisory Council are abolished and their authority, powers and functions transferred to the Natural Resources Commission.
- The Mackinac Island State Park Commission, Michigan Forest Finance Authority, Michigan Historical Commission, Michigan State Waterways Commission, and Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board are transferred from the DNR to the DNRE.
- The Low-Level Radioactive Waste Authority and the Office of the Great Lakes are transferred from the DEQ to the DNRE.

What will the public notice about the DNRE?

As the department takes shape, decisions wherever appropriate will be made closer to the field in a transparent manner. Process redesign will lead to a more effective and nimble review of applications and permits. In addition, the public will benefit from the state's long and proud history of preservation of the state's outdoor heritage, the largest publicly owned land-base east of the Mississippi, and a healthy, safe environment for our citizens.

Structurally the public will see the traditional resource and environmental divisions of the two departments realigned into three units, sharing common missions – Resource Management, Stewardship, and Environmental Protection. The public will also see a stronger regional structure, where regional directors will manage planning, coordination, and communications across programs. These four regions will be based on Michigan's major watersheds: Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake Erie and Lake Superior. This watershed focus will result in a stronger emphasis on healthy ecosystems and a more rapid response to evolving local issues.

What about camping reservations, hunting or fishing licenses, environmental permits and other current programs? Who do I contact now?

Current DNR and DEQ programs remain open for business and continue to function as before, with the same contact information.

Where do I find more information about the new DNRE?

The new DNRE Web site is a great place for more information as the transition continues – www.michigan.gov/dnre. In addition, all information about all DNR and DEQ programs can be found through links from that site. Telephone numbers for specific programs remain the same.

What will change in the long run?

The Michigan DNRE will focus more on ecosystem health, be more nimble in responding to environmental permit applications from job providers, and be more efficient in internal operations. The department will be the national model for combining natural and environmental resource management in a single agency.

How does this save money?

The state will realize financial advantages from a centralized DNRE administration, elimination of redundant positions, more aggressive marketing of Michigan's natural resources and environment, and more efficient program delivery. Streamlining will identify more efficient models for program delivery and may result in recommendations for program elimination or transfer. Other programs with similar functions will be consolidated and employees will be given greater flexibility in how they effectively perform their work. In addition, the new department leadership will work with

stakeholders and legislators to recommend a sustainable funding model that allows the department to protect and manage Michigan's natural and environmental resources.

The department will avoid incurring unnecessary additional expenses for signage, printed materials, employee uniforms, or other items. Items with the DNRE name will not be ordered until necessary to replace depleted DNR or DEQ supplies.

How does this fit in with the larger goal of streamlining state government?

Creating one agency, the new DNRE, by consolidating the functions of DNR and DEQ is part of Governor Granholm's ongoing efforts to streamline state government. Three state departments, plus more than 150 state boards and commissions, have already been eliminated; additionally the consolidation of the Departments of Information Technology and Management and Budget will result in another reduction.

###