

Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation



January 24, 2012

TDEC employees,

Over the past six months, the department has completed a comprehensive review of our structure and operations to assess current effectiveness and to identify opportunities to improve efficiencies and our level of customer service. This analysis was assisted by tremendous input from people inside the department and a diverse set of stakeholders outside TDEC. Feedback we received confirmed department employees are dedicated public servants, but our performance is often inhibited by structural, process or system limitations.



One of the most significant challenges identified in our organizational review was a perceived level of inconsistency regarding TDEC actions and communications with some stakeholders, including local government entities, permit applicants and permittees, other state agencies or departments, and environmental stakeholders across the state. Therefore, the department will be taking a series of actions to improve our coordination, communication and overall responsiveness as we move forward in addressing these challenges.

The first set of organizational changes is focused on how TDEC relates to external stakeholders. These organizational changes include creating an Office of External Affairs in the Commissioner's Office and establishing a new position in each field office called Regional Director for External Affairs that will serve as the primary point of contact for the public and stakeholders in a particular TDEC region. These new department-wide positions will be responsible for outreach to local governments and municipalities, development districts, existing business and industry, potential new business and industry, economic and community development representatives, environmental groups and the general public.

Having a dedicated external affairs contact in each region will facilitate:

- ◆ improved customer service by helping stakeholders and the public get accurate, timely, and consistent information;
- ◆ a greater understanding regarding environmental regulations on the front-end to promote compliance, economic development and environmental stewardship; and
- ◆ expanded promotion of Tennessee State Parks and Natural Areas.

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Coordinating these responsibilities in one office will help us operate consistently across the state. Tisha Calabrese-Benton will lead the Office of External Affairs. Since Tisha is presently on maternity leave, David Owenby, who is assuming a new role as my Chief of Staff, has agreed to lead the Office of External Affairs in her absence.

We are instituting another significant change regarding how field office staff for the environmental program divisions (air, water, solid waste, UST) will be managed. Environmental Field Office Managers (EFOMs) will now report directly to the director of their respective divisions, as we are eliminating the Field Office Director positions within the Bureau of Environment. Through the departmental assessment, we identified that the present dual-report system made accountability more difficult. Division Directors will now have 100 percent accountability for their staff – in every office location. We met with all current Field Office Directors today to discuss these changes and we will continue working with the current Field Office Directors and Division Directors as this transition goes forward.

I am pleased to announce that Brenda Apple is stepping into the role of TDEC Emergency Services Director to provide agency-wide oversight for the department's emergency service capability, delivery and risk management activities. Brenda will also be assuming the TEMA-related responsibilities currently performed by Nick Fielder.

Another way we will create meaningful, lasting improvements for environmental quality and economic vitality is through the establishment of TDEC's Office of Sustainable Practices. Led by Lori Munkeboe, this group will advance a culture of sustainability across the department, state government and with our various partners. The office will use an action-based approach to reduce the environmental impact of our own operations, coordinate with key agencies to improve overall government environmental performance, and support best environmental practices among external stakeholders.

Effective February 1, we are making these changes to our structure and reporting relationships to create better consistency, coordination and responsiveness across the department. I expect these changes to complement other organization initiatives that will improve our work efficiency and overall customer service. We will be sharing more information on these important department efforts in the days ahead. I appreciate everyone's continued good work on behalf of Tennessee and our citizens.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robt J. Martineau, Jr.', is located below the 'Respectfully,' text.

Robert J. Martineau, Jr.
Commissioner