



# Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

## Water Resources Department

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### MEMORANDUM

TO: Water Resources Commission

FROM: Brenda Bateman, Senior Policy Coordinator

SUBJECT: Agenda Item M, November 20, 2009  
Water Resources Commission Meeting

### Key Performance Measures Report

#### I. Issue Statement

Each year, the Water Resources Department (Department) submits a report that tracks the Department's Performance in 14 key areas and is an essential part of the Department's budget presentation to the Governor's Office and Legislature. The Department submitted its most recent report on September 18, 2009.

#### II. Background

The Department's performance measures cover agency programs related to streamflow restoration, protection and gaging; ground water monitoring; and regulatory, administrative, and outreach activities. The Department has had all of its measures in place since 2005 or earlier, so we are building a solid data set that helps track how the Department is doing and areas for improvement. The 2008-09 report in its entirety is in Attachment 1.

#### III. Discussion

There are five measures that track our Department's efficiency, including measures to track the Department's processing time for review of water management and conservation plans (690-9), water right applications (690-10), and for water right transfers (690-11). In all of these areas, the Department has made great strides improving process, information technology and training, resulting in more quicker processing times and reduced backlog.

Other efficiency measures quantify the workload of staff over time. For instance, 690-12 tracks the number of places where water is legally taken out of stream for beneficial use per FTE of field staff, and 690-13 tracks the number of administrative transactions processed per FTE. To achieve our targets for efficiency measures, we have utilized technology to streamline processes and improve staff efficiency.

See pages 2 and 3 of Attachment 1 for the titles of the 14 measures, along with a brief definition of each.

Generally, the Department continues to make progress, performing at, or in the direction of, its targets.

There are three measures, KPM #3, #4, and #10 that are not performing at, or in the direction of, their targets. They encompass the areas of “Monitoring Compliance,” “Streamflow Gaging,” and “Customer Service.”

**KPM #3 “Monitor Compliance.”** This Key Performance Measure documents the percent of total “regulatory actions” that found water right holders in compliance with water rights and regulations. (A regulatory action is any action that causes a change in use or maintenance or a field inspection that confirms that no change is needed to comply with the water right, statute, or order of the Department.) The goal is to increase the percent.

In 2008, 10,900 regulatory actions were taken by field staff, and in 94 percent of these cases, water right holders were in compliance. The percentage can vary by a few points from year to year based on water supply conditions or economic factors. 94 percent compliance is the lowest compliance rate recorded since this KPM was established in 2003.

It is not entirely clear what drove this decrease in 2008. However, it may be attributable to the addition of five new regional assistant watermasters. These five positions were added in the 2007-09 legislatively adopted budget and were on board for the 2008 irrigation season. With these additional staff, the Department has been able to work in new areas and work more intensively in existing areas. This might explain the higher incidence of finding and reporting water uses out of compliance with their right or illegal uses. The Department has observed that compliance is higher in basins where staff routinely manage water use. The Department is evaluating this data further and will be closing monitoring whether this trend continues in the 2009 water year.

**KPM #4 “Streamflow Gaging.”** The Department maintains a network of gaging stations statewide to manage surface water resources and also cooperates with the U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and others in collecting and sharing streamflow data. The goal is to increase the percent compared to a benchmark of 215 gaging stations.

In 2009, the Department reduced the number of cooperative gages by 22 and is currently operating a total of 200 gages. This is 7 percent lower than the 2001 benchmark. The majority of gages dropped were contract gages established to primarily monitor water quality in the Tualatin Basin. The streamflow data was not needed by the watermaster for stream management purposes; however the gages are still being operated by a private contractor. Budget reductions in the 09-11 biennial budget eliminated two staff in this

program area, limiting the Department's capacity to gather and process stream gage data. Positions lost were the Northwest Region Hydrotech responsible for servicing gaging stations in the northwest corner of Oregon and a records processor in the Measurement and Reporting Section.

An evaluation of the existing network is in process (see Agenda Item E, August 2008 staff report) and needs to be completed to determine if the current network provides the necessary information for effective management and understanding of increasing demand on Oregon's water resources. The evaluation will include an assessment of new gage needs, consideration of re-establishing discontinued gages, and the condition of current gages. This information is critical to understand the budget and staffing levels necessary to maintain, collect, and analyze data needed for proper management of surface water.

**KPM #10 "Customer Service Satisfaction."** This Key Performance Measure was the subject of this same presentation last year, when staff noted that the measurements have been depressed by the length of time it takes the Department to process ground water applications. The data used here are based on a bi-annual telephone survey of Water Resources Department customers. The data attached to this report are the same data reported last year.

Generally, customer dissatisfaction with the Department's "timeliness," demonstrates the need to increase staff resources in our Ground Water Section. Ground water applications take time to complete because of the hydrogeologic review required. They are more scientifically demanding than surface water reviews.

The Department already has taken actions to begin to decrease the backlog in ground water applications. The Ground Water Section has put standard operating procedures in place, to avoid creating customized research for every application. It has also curtailed the Section's involvement in special projects, in order to focus on processing applications.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

For the 2010–11 report, the Oregon Legislature has asked the Department to report on two new measures, for existing programs (water use measurement & reporting). These are programs in which we have lost significant resources—including 100 percent of the reporting staff. As a result, it is likely that no progress will be reported in these program areas.

Achieving the Department's performance targets is a challenge, given state budget limitations that affect the recruitment of technical staff. All of these challenges will influence our ability to meet performance targets for our measures in the future. To meet these challenges, we continue to streamline processes, develop technological solutions, and strengthen partnerships with water users and other stakeholders. We also continue to

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request the budget resources necessary to provide timely and accurate service to WRD customers.

Attachment 1: Department's Annual Performance Progress Report for 2008-09

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