



# Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

## Water Resources Department

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### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Water Resources Commission

**FROM:** Dwight French  
Water Rights & Adjudications Division Administrator

**SUBJECT:** Agenda Item D, November 18, 2010  
Water Resources Commission Meeting

### **Performance Efficiency Review**

#### **I. Introduction**

Staff will update the Commission on the recent activities that have taken place related to process improvement. The Commission received a similar update in February of 2010 which focused on the recently completed "Lean" process. The primary purpose of this update is to provide the commission a final report of the Efficiency Review Group.

Attachment 1 shows a list of three historic backlogs and our progress over recent years.

#### **II. Discussion**

The Department pursued two different improvement processes during the past year.

#### **Efficiency Review Group:**

WRD held four meetings with a group of eight volunteers including water law attorneys and consultants who are familiar with our processes. This group developed a list of ideas that might lead to process or customer service improvements. Attachment 2 is a final report from the Efficiency Review Group which includes recommendations and status reports for the changes in progress.

The Department wishes to thank and recognize the eight volunteers who served on the Efficiency Review Group. Their names are listed in the report.

**Lean:**

Many public agencies around the country are using a technique, often referred to as “Lean,” with regularity and success to reduce backlogs and speed up processing time frames.

We were very fortunate to be able to hire a temporary employee with Lean experience. Mike Anderson facilitated three work groups through a total of five different Lean exercises from mid November 2009 through January 2010. These three work groups (transfers, new water right applications, certificates) made several improvements leading to reduced applicant waiting times and more efficient processing. Attachment 3 is a list of some of the process improvement highlights from the three groups who used the process at WRD.

One of the reasons that Lean has proven effective around the country is that the process does not lessen or remove any existing environmental protection standards.

**III. Conclusion**

The Department will attempt to reduce backlogs during current and future biennia. It is quite possible that there will be a reduced staff size in some of the Department’s work areas. This makes it even more important than ever that we continue to find efficiencies through various process improvement efforts.

- Attachment 1: Process Improvement Accomplishments
- Attachment 2: Final Report of the Efficiency Review Group
- Attachment 3: Lean Improvement Highlights

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