



# REPORT:

**EXECUTIVE ORDER JML 24-17**

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**STREAMLINING PERMITTING PROCESSES  
IN THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY**

**PREPARED BY THE LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**





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# PREAMBLE

On February 5, 2024, Louisiana Governor Jeff Landry signed **Executive Order JML 24-17: Streamlining Permitting Processes in the Oil and Gas Industry**. The Executive Order (EO) — which directs the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) and the Louisiana Department of Energy and Natural Resources (LDENR) to promote the streamlining of its permitting processes associated with the Oil and Gas Industry — instructs LDEQ to submit a report to the Office of the Governor by December 31, 2024, detailing the steps that the agency has taken to comply with the order. LDEQ is proud to submit this report on our efforts to fulfill Executive Order JML 24-17.

The Oil and Gas Industry is integral to Louisiana’s economy, contributing to employment, public revenue and energy independence and National security. The industry supports over 45,000 direct jobs and 260,000 related positions, making it a cornerstone for families and communities across the State. Additionally, the industry contributes about \$1 billion in State and local taxes, aiding essential services that benefit all Louisiana. LDEQ plays an integral role in the State’s economic development here — without a permit from LDEQ for air, water and/or waste, these businesses are not able to operate.

Given the significance of this Industry, it is crucial that we establish and maintain a permitting environment for businesses that is efficient, transparent and responsive while upholding the agency’s commitment to environmental protection. LDEQ is a young agency established in 1984, with more 700 employees in our Capitol Park headquarters and at 6 regional offices across the State, and a mission to provide service to the people of Louisiana through comprehensive environmental protection in order to promote and protect human health, safety and welfare. However, LDEQ’s current processes are outdated and sometimes too analog to meet the demand of industry and to compete with neighboring states. It is essential that we streamline and modernize the agency’s processes and move it *from the Stone Age to the Space Age* — for the benefit of all Louisiana.

This report outlines the steps that the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality has taken to make its permitting process faster and more accessible, supporting economic growth while ensuring responsible stewardship of our natural resources.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## *A Balanced Approach to Permitting*

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality’s ongoing efforts to enhance the State’s permitting process for the Oil and Gas Industry are detailed throughout this report. By leveraging technology to establish clear guidelines, standardize procedures and engage with the community, LDEQ is creating processes that provide transparency for the public; accountability for the agency and its staff; and efficiency and accessibility for the benefit of Louisiana citizens and all involved.

LDEQ has acknowledged the utility of Executive Order (EO) JML 24-17 for the Oil and Industry, which contributed \$73 billion to Louisiana’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2019, according to a report from the Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil & Gas Association (LMOGA). LDEQ goes beyond the EO’s parameters to expand its effects to all permits, licenses and accreditations carried out by the agency, not just Oil and Gas. This agency-wide approach to provide these essential services to all industries regulated by LDEQ, and not just a specific group, will be transformative for all industries: large and small, local and international (considering size and also reach of the company), and the State as a whole.

To achieve these goals, LDEQ has taken significant steps to integrate technology into the permitting process. This approach began with a comprehensive review of all existing technology and associated contracts, with a focus on how these resources connect and support the current permitting workflow, all workflows for official LDEQ documents, certificates, variances, etc.



Two dedicated teams were created to carry out the scope of this phase: the Regulatory Team and the Technology Team. As of December 2024, LDEQ has invested more than 5,700 combined hours in a full-scale agency review: identifying various IT and data systems for both internal and external functions; outlining workflows and aligning against their and relevant regulations; and researching newer software and applications to automate current processes. These efforts enabled the agency to identify areas where technology could more effectively serve both internal and external stakeholders and set the foundation for a modernized, user-focused Dashboard and permitting processes.

## *Regulatory Team vs. Technology Team*

To create a manageable workflow to understand the current permitting process, LDEQ established two working teams: the **Regulatory Team** and the **Technology Team**. These teams have complementary but distinct purposes and workloads, a multi-faceted approach that was necessary to determine the full scope of what will be required.

### Regulatory Team

Focuses on regulatory and workflow processes in the agency with the functionality of an online Dashboard, ultimately to streamline operations while ensuring compliance with existing regulations and commitments.

#### *Key Accomplishments:*

- Developed a workflow for every permit type, of which LDEQ has more than 225, with each workflow depicting each step of the process from application to permit decision
- Mapped 900 internal workflow processes across LDEQ, representing the 225+ different permit types
- For each step in the flow, the following were labeled as appropriate:
  - Regulations
  - Statutes
  - Legislative commitments
  - Grant commitments
- Identified timeframes and staff responsibilities for each step
- Identified inefficiencies and opportunities for standardization within current procedures
- Inventoried and categorized all forms, letters, permits, notifications, certifications, licenses and other agency instruments
  - 7 categories: Major Permit, Minor Permit, Certificate, Notification, Variation, Miscellaneous, Termination
- Identified features for future systems, such as automated emails and integrated mapping, to reduce the burdensome steps in workflows
- Identified regulations to be revised to enable digital and online systems

### Technology Team

Responsible for evaluating agency technology, data, software and platforms and how to leverage them to create a Dashboard to parlay into an electronic portal and online permitting system.

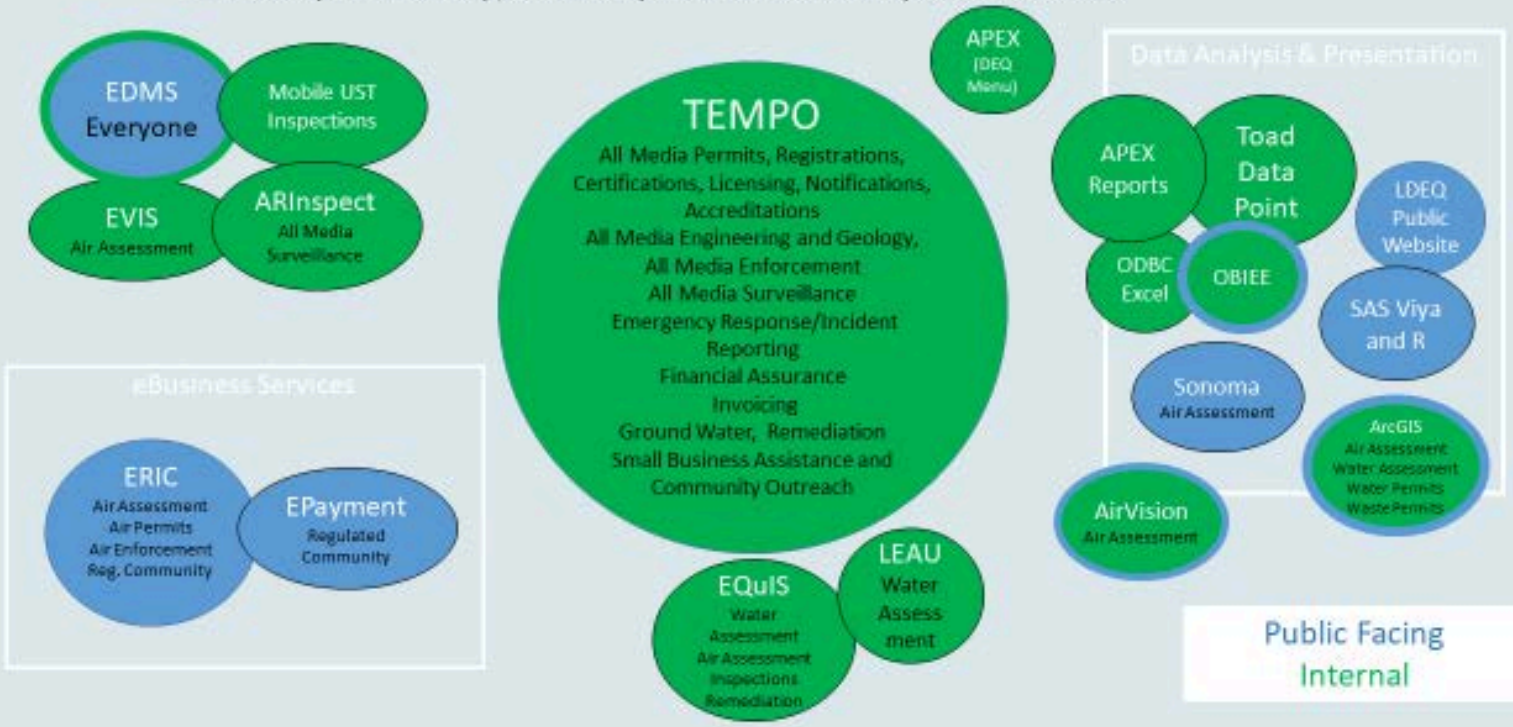
#### *Key Accomplishments:*

- Identified 72 tech systems used agency-wide, categorizing into 19 core systems for critical functionality
- Reviewed technology-related contracts to validate service effectiveness and necessity
- Provided a demonstration of an LDEQ Dashboard prototype to Governor Landry
- Explored several Artificial Intelligence (AI) capabilities to advance repetitive tasks

# LDEQ's Data Systems Network

## LDEQ's Major Data Systems Network

- LDEQ has a network of 19 data systems that operate our external and internal facing structures.
- Some systems overlap, while many other do not. Most systems are ad hoc.



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## *Developing LDEQ's Dashboard*

Following the full-scale, agency-wide review of all IT and data systems of permit types, the next step for LDEQ will be to outline and develop a Dashboard with multiple functions. LDEQ identified that a Dashboard would provide more efficient solutions for the transparency of permits at LDEQ. The Dashboard is multifaceted.

- **For External Stakeholders:** The goal of the Dashboard is to enable permittees, applicants and other external users to track the progress of their submission to LDEQ, ensuring transparency, accessibility, and accountability throughout the permitting process. It provides not only visibility into the current stage but also identifies who is responsible at each step — whether that be LDEQ, the applicant, an external governmental agency or external entity. The Dashboard will provide the major phases of a permit with estimated timelines, which are delivered by prior performance; this should result in fostering an informed experience for users. The Dashboard will offer a structured view of the permitting process, with defined phases and specific tasks for each permit type, certification or process.
- **For Internal Stakeholders:** The Dashboard equips LDEQ staff with actionable data, highlights commonalities across permit types and standardizes task tracking to enhance consistency and accuracy. This allows LDEQ to analyze and determine delays and where to place our resources to increase efficiencies.

By positioning technology as a critical element of the permitting process, LDEQ is building a system that is not only more transparent, accountable, accessible and user-friendly but that also provides actionable data to pinpoint priority areas for removing hindrances, resulting in decreased permitting times and increasing regulatory assurance for Industry and the regulated community. This provides better management, better compliance, and increased confidence for regulatory assurance. This will also support the introduction of automated processes for routine tasks, reducing processing times and boosting overall efficiency.

A demo of the four most popular/utilized of the 225+ different permit types was provided to Governor Landry in December 2024. It included almost 1,800 permits on this demonstration of a Dashboard.

**Day 1 of LDEQ's Innovation Summit on July 10, 2024. Pictured are LDEQ Secretary Aurelia S. Giacometto, leaders of international Oil and Gas and petrochemical companies and leading associations, as well as Louisiana Senator Adam Bass and representatives of Governor Landry's Office.**



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## *Establishing Clear Guidelines and Standardizing Procedures*

To build a permitting process that is transparent, accountable, accessible and easy to navigate, LDEQ is developing and implementing clear, consistent guidelines. These guidelines:

- *Outline the Necessary Documentation and Steps:* Applicants have a clear understanding of required documents and procedures, promoting transparency and predictability.
- *Focus on Essential Procedures:* By concentrating on regulatory requirements, crucial steps and removing unnecessary ones, the process is streamlined without compromising standards and provides cost savings to applicants, LDEQ, and the Louisiana taxpayers.
- *Standardize Timelines Across Permit Types:* Consistent timelines provide applicants and businesses with the expected approval timeframes, fostering regulatory assurances, which is pivotal for businesses' decision on investments and operations.

By establishing these guidelines, LDEQ provides better guidance for applicants, reducing confusion and creating a more efficient process. This standardized approach fosters a streamlined permitting process. This will also help to reduce the workload of staff, as citizens have a more convenient way to access information on applications before reaching out to LDEQ.



**LDEQ Secretary Aurelia S. Giacometto welcomes attendees to the first day of the Innovation Summit on July 10, 2024, setting the tone for a productive and collaborative meeting to present and fine-tune LDEQ's efforts to create a Dashboard and online permitting system.**



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## *Engaging the Community to Foster Understanding*

LDEQ recognizes that the usability of a Dashboard and online permitting system would be an essential component, and the agency prioritized engaging with the business community to get input, insight and feedback. LDEQ created an opportunity to launch our vision of the Dashboard with full intention of participation from users and stakeholders of the system so that actual users could provide real-time accounting of what functions in a Dashboard and electronic permitting system would be important; their experiences with other states' systems; and the current directions of the companies in attendance. Many of the Oil & Gas and Petrochemical Industries operating in Louisiana are interconnected with operations in other states and nations where this technology is already in use.

LDEQ held an Innovation Summit on July 10 and 11, 2024, with the regulated community to introduce a brief demonstration and use as a platform to gather valuable feedback. This two-day Summit set the stage for ongoing dialogue and collaboration among all stakeholders, and was organized by:

- ***Day 1: 36 participants:*** corporate leaders, facility plant managers, policy makers, executive directors of Oil and Gas associations, elected officials, etc.
- ***Day 2: 52 participants:*** consultants, environmental leads of companies, permit writers, contractors, etc.

Prior to the Summit, LDEQ provided two surveys: one for Day 1 participants and a second tailored for Day 2 participants. The survey provided insight on expectations and needs of stakeholders and their businesses regarding the integration of newer technologies for permitting processes.

Below are some of the questions from the surveys with a categorization of answers given by attendees:

- **Question 1: What information is most important on a Dashboard?**
  - Permit Status
  - Processing Times
  - Outstanding Permitting Actions
- **Question 2: How can we improve the efficiency of the permitting process?**
  - Electronic Submittals and/or automatic updates
  - Increase communication by emails and meetings
  - Timeframes and framework
- **Question 3: What specific issues do you encounter with the existing system or other electronic permitting systems?**
  - Manual entry of data, duplication, and redundant processes
  - Lack of communication on the status of permits
  - Complex operations
- **Question 4: What is something that LDEQ does better than other States in the permitting that we should enhance?**
  - Relationships between stakeholders
  - Expedited/fast track permits

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# RESULTS & COMPLIANCE

LDEQ was directed under **Executive Order JML 24-17** to report on the directives outlined within by December 31, 2024. Our commitment to transparency, accountability and accessibility throughout the process is reflected in this report, which details the steps taken to comply with the order and our ongoing dedication to improvement. Feedback from industry and community stakeholders has been overwhelmingly positive for the direction of using greater technologies for the Dashboard and online permitting systems.

The following pages outline five specific ways that LDEQ has addressed the directives laid out in Executive Order JML 24-17.



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## A. Establish Comprehensive Measures to Continue Cultivating Efficiencies in Permitting

By enumerating at the steps within each flow of a permit, accreditation, letter, etc., then we can identify where “creep” has occurred and steps that can be digitized.

### 1. Workflow Evaluation:

- Comprehensive workflow evaluations are underway, with all agency processes to be analyzed.
- The process flows were mapped in 8 phases starting May 2024 to December 2024. There were 4 external phases: Goals and commitments, Division only, Customer service, Miscellaneous; and 4 internal phases: Goals and commitments, Division only, Division to division, Miscellaneous.
- All processes within the agency were mapped by the end of 2024.
- With the bulk of LDEQ’s processes being external-facing, the agency has currently completed a review of over 750 processes at the end of Phase 4, the midway point of the project.

### 2. Regulatory Team Initiatives:

- *Electronic Signatures and Approvals*: Regulatory reviews are focused on implementing electronic signatures and approvals, including Professional Engineering (PE) and Geologist Seals, which are critical to modernization.
- *Regulation Updates*: Identifying and removing regulatory barriers hindering adoption of new technology. Approx. 20 regulations will need adjusting to allow for the use of new technology.
- *Forms Modernization*: All 196 agency application forms are being assessed to streamline, combine, or eliminate redundancies. These forms will be fully integrated into LDEQ’s online system.
- *Gap Analysis*: Agency-wide policy and process gaps have been identified, with plans being developed to address these issues comprehensively. Gaps will be documented, corrected and implemented agency-wide . Examples of gaps include:
  - a. Addressing the consistency of Notices of Deficiencies (NODs), including using the same format across different LDEQ offices
  - b. Offices entering into Electronic Document Management System (EDMS), instead of pushing to another division for entry.

### 3. Timelines and Processes:

- End-to-end timelines for all permitting processes have been established to support standardization. This will ensure accurate measurement and improvements to the system in practice.
- LDEQ has committed more than 5,700 man hours to the evaluation of processes for all permitting types, which will help ensure a consistent approach across all divisions.
  - *Example*: Currently, paper documents are submitted to a specific division to determine if administratively complete by all information entered. If not, a back-and-forth ensues with the facility. Under an electronic portal, only completed applications can be submitted for LDEQ to begin its process.

## B. Enhance Interagency Coordination and Collaboration

LDEQ is working with the Secretary of State to link changes in business licenses, such as a change in ownership of a business, to our online system, which results in streamlined communication and documentation. Therefore, companies won't have to make changes at both the Secretary of State and LDEQ; LDEQ's systems will automatically update from the Secretary of State.



**Knowledge Sharing:** The agency met with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, which successfully built a Dashboard in 2021 that resulted in reduced inquiries from the public and better alignment and allocation of resources to maintain efficiencies in streamlining — leading to a reduced taxpayer burden.

## C. Standardize Workflow Processes

LDEQ Activity Type	Issued
Major Permit	630
Minor Permit	2219
Certificate	18920
Notification	12995
Variation	1239
Miscellaneous	929
Termination	403
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37,335</b>

(State of Louisiana Fiscal Year 2023)

To develop a data structure for a Dashboard and online permitting system requires knowing the workflow for each permit, certificate, license, accreditation, etc. LDEQ began piloting a Dashboard with the three most requested permit types by the Oil and Gas Industry:

1. Initial Major Industrial Water Permit (Water)
2. Initial Minor Source Oil & Gas (Air)
3. Initial Title V (Air)

These three permit types encompass multiple phases of the permit writing process. By piloting the Dashboard with these permits, the agency had a holistic and comprehensive approach for using the more complex permit types. This also helped the agency identify overlapping technical programs and develop ideas to consolidate and enhance system or platform efficiencies, without compromise to LDEQ's regulations or mission.

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## D. Public Outreach and Engagement

### 1. Stakeholder Engagement:

- LDEQ used the Innovation Summit to solicit feedback from Industry and other stakeholders on its current permitting process and present a demonstration of a Dashboard design. The Summit was more than a think-tank session; LDEQ delivered a platform showing company profile and information for completion of the various permit phases, for example. LDEQ has made great progress on refining our methodology to develop a Dashboard.
- The Summit exceeded expectations, as explained by many in attendance. LDEQ updated participants on the complexities of LDEQ's current data systems. The agency began to shape perceptions of driving a holistic approach to embrace technology to streamline permitting, and provide real-time information to applicants.
- Feedback from participants is essential to our planning and development:
  - The Dashboard needs to be more granular, and LDEQ has adjusted to include permit steps and background information.
  - Multiple facilities and locations need to be visible on the Dashboard at one time, not just one facility at a time.
  - The new systems need to include multiple search fields so that data can be accessed more easily.
- Permitting improvements are not limited to the State of Louisiana. Many State and Federal agencies are utilizing technology to create efficiencies and accelerate review and approval.

## E. Performance Metrics Development

### 1. Metrics Integration:

- Existing metrics within LDEQ's current data system are being enhanced for their potential incorporation into the new Dashboard.

### 2. Internal Dashboard:

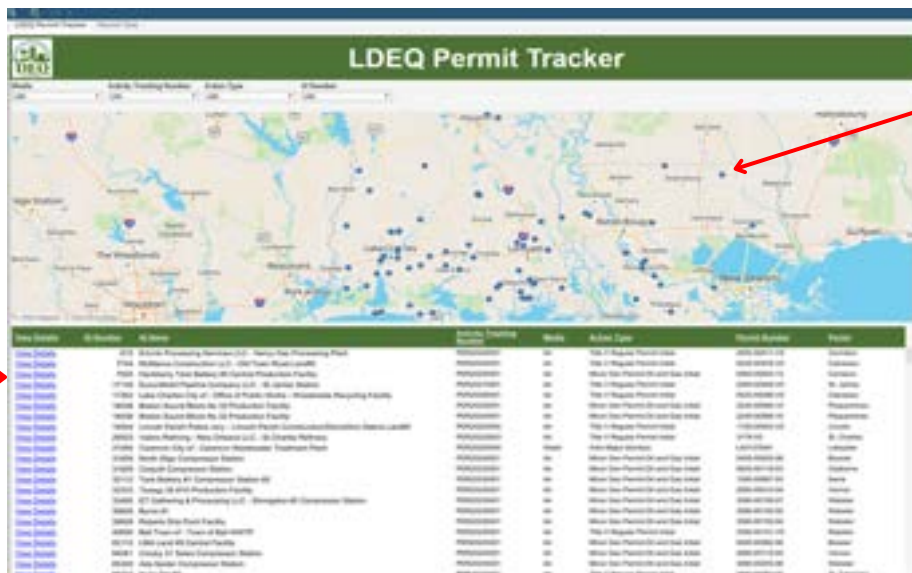
- LDEQ is exploring internal reporting of metrics using the Dashboard to allow employees to track performance. This reporting can be used to identify inefficiencies, resulting in data-driven decision making for managers and executives to allocate resources appropriately.

## Dashboard Demonstration (aka LDEQ Permit Tracker)

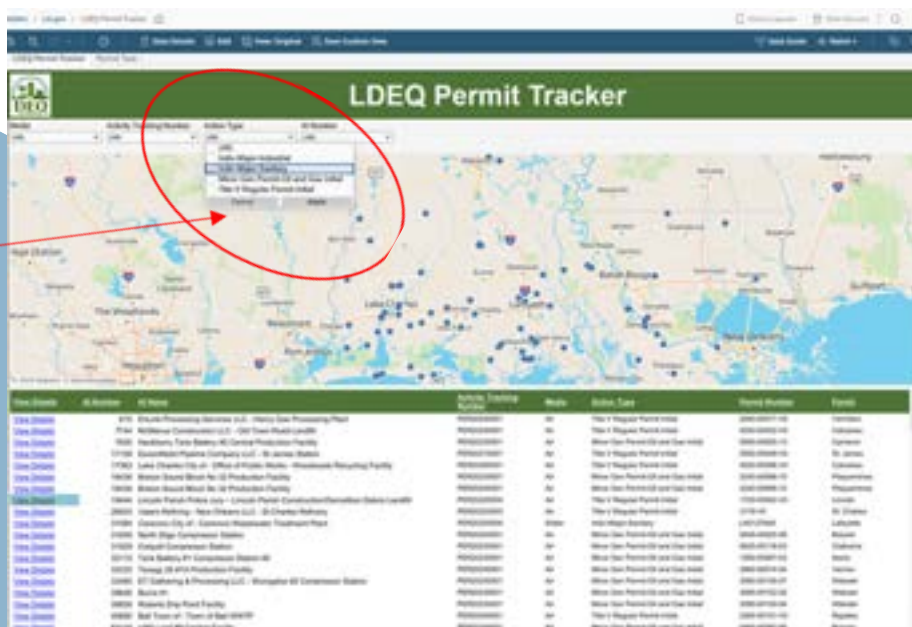
In December 2024, LDEQ provided a demonstration of our Dashboard to Governor Landry. Below is an illustration of the LDEQ Dashboard Landing Page. The demonstration included 1,764 permitted activities completed within the last 50 days, *e.g.*, the top 3 permitted activities used were Title V Regular Permits, Minor Source General Permits [MSOG], and Major Individual Water Permits.

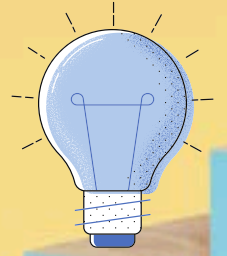
- a. The facility location is represented as a blue dot on map.
- b. **View Details** hyperlink to view permit specific details.

On the Landing Page, there is the capability to sort by permit, media and permit type and view details provided, such as the current status of the permit, which party is responsible for the current step of the process, etc.



SORTING PERMITTED ACTIVITIES

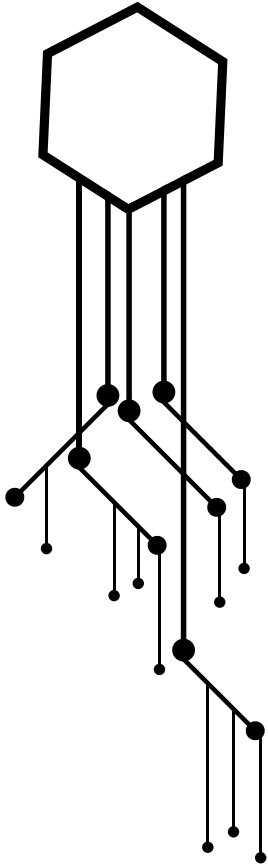




# **NEXT STEPS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

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## ***NEXT STEPS***



### **1. Strategic Assessment & Tactical Roadmap:**

- Conduct Strategic Assessment and Tactical Roadmap based on priorities and gaps, and find appropriate technologies to serve the LDEQ regulated community of Louisiana.

### **2. Stakeholder Feedback Utilization:**

- Actively incorporate feedback from the Innovation Summit, public meetings and surveys into the permitting system's final design.

### **3. Pilot Programs:**

- Implement pilot programs for the Dashboard and electronic permitting system and other programs that can be digitized or moved online. Ideally, the agency will begin with high-impact or frequently requested permits or documents, and test to ensure effectiveness before full-scale rollout.



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# CONCLUSION

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) has made substantial progress in enhancing the permitting process for the Oil and Gas Industry, aligning with the goals set forth by Governor Jeff Landry in Executive Order JML 24-17. Recognizing the critical role this industry plays in our State's economy, workforce, energy independence and National security, we are developing a more transparent, efficient, accountable and accessible system that also respects environmental protections in the State.

Through the utilization of technology, we are destined to improve and enhance every aspect of the permitting process — resulting in assurances for the regulated community, particularly for business operations and investments in Louisiana. To date, LDEQ has committed more than 5,700 man hours to deliver improved technologies for permitting. Technology enables LDEQ to build a process that is transparent, accountable and responsive. By starting with a centralized Dashboard, we improve transparency and accountability and identify current status and next steps for each permitted activity. This integrated approach fosters trust and confidence within the Industry, regulated community and the Louisiana community as a whole, by creating a permitting process that is efficient, transparent and accessible.

LDEQ remains dedicated to continuous improvement. By tracking metrics on processing times, applicant feedback and submission rates, we ensure that this process evolves with Industry demands, public expectations and environmental stewardship. With positive feedback from Industry leaders, community members and elected officials, our efforts are recognized and grounded in collaboration.

LDEQ will aggressively push forward. Other states have Dashboard and online permitting systems that have been in place for years. Louisiana is competitively positioning itself to lead the Southern Renaissance, and the technological advancements at LDEQ are pivotal to Governor Landry's agenda. It is essential that we streamline and modernize the agency's processes and move it *from the Stone Age to the Space Age* — for the benefit of all Louisiana.

As we look ahead, LDEQ will continue its work to completely revamp and perfect our permitting processes by maintaining open communication with stakeholders, leveraging technology for further efficiency and prioritizing environmental stewardship under the direction of Governor Landry. This approach will support Louisiana's economic growth, reinforce trust and sustain a balanced pathway for the Oil and Gas Industry's future in our State and environmental health and stewardship.