

Our Water

Keeping it Clean

North Dakota Department of Health



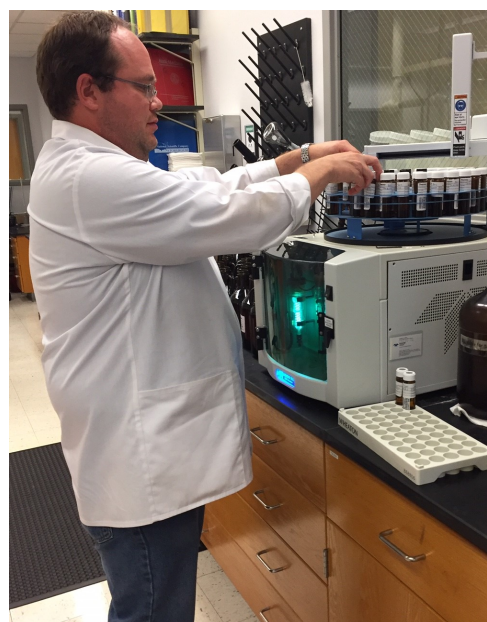
Environmental Health Section

North Dakota Creates New Department of Environmental Quality

by Jim Collins, Jr., Environmental Scientist, North Dakota Department of Health

During the 2017 legislative session, lawmakers passed Senate Bill 2327 establishing a new North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality (NDDEQ). Senate Bill 2327 allows just over two years (July 1, 2019) for the North Dakota Department of Health's Environmental Health Section to transition to the NDDEQ.

While the new NDDEQ may be organized differently than the existing Environmental Health Section of the Department of Health, the services and programs provided will stay the same. No new programs are proposed, nor any current programs eliminated as a result of this transition. The primary changes will be the name of the agency and its



Chemist Matt Dewald analyzes samples for total organic carbon.



Kathleen Kangas with the Division of Waste Management meets with emergency responders during an industrial fire response.

- Manufacturing or agricultural processing industry
- Solid fuels industry
- Liquid and gas fuels industry
- Crop agriculture
- Waste management industry
- Thermal electric generation industry
- Environmental sciences
- Livestock industry

The director of the NDDEQ will be a cabinet-level position appointed by

new stand-alone status.

One noticeable change will be the creation of a new 13-member Environmental Review Advisory Board that will provide input to the NDDEQ regarding department policy and new regulations. Ex officio board members are the state engineer, state geologist, and the director of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department. An individual with an agronomy or soil sciences degree will be appointed, as well as representatives from each of the following:

- County/municipal government

the governor and will serve as the executive secretary of the board. The existing Air Quality Advisory Board and the Water Pollution Control Advisory Board will be consolidated, and additional members will be appointed.

The biggest challenge in the creating the new NDDEQ will be obtaining all necessary approvals, revising rules as needed, updating interagency agreements, and ensuring that primacy agreements with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency remain in place.

As previously stated, the new NDDEQ will have the same duties as

the Environmental Health Section. Currently, there are approximately 150 employees in the section's five divisions:

Air Quality

- Indoor Air Quality (lead, radon, asbestos and mold)
- Air Quality Monitoring (permits, inspections, modeling and regional haze)
- Radiation Control

Chemistry

- Soil, water sample analysis

Municipal Facilities

- State Revolving Fund (Clean Water and Drinking Water)
- Drinking Water

Waste Management

- Hazardous Waste
- Solid Waste (recycling, pollution prevention, permitting, inspections)
- Underground Storage Tank

Water Quality

- Ground water (ambient monitoring, well construction, underground injection control)
- Permits (municipal, septic pumper, stormwater, animal feeding operations, pesticide application)
- Watershed Management (ambient stream and lake monitoring, nonpoint source pollution, total maximum daily loads, harmful algal blooms, fish kill reporting)
- Spill Investigations (environmental releases and investigations)
- Special Projects (water quality standards, interstate and international water issues, environmental impact review)

Establishing a new NDDEQ will

bring greater visibility to the wide range of duties performed by the employees in these programs. A state agency specifically created for environmental protection will also make it easier for the public to know who to contact with questions about the environment.



Aaron Larsen from the Division of Water Quality takes a winter water quality sample on Devils Lake.



Division of Municipal Facilities staff inspect a water recovery facility.



A Division of Water Quality employee conducts ambient monitoring on a lake.



An employee of the Division of Air Quality puts the finishing touches on an ambient air quality monitoring station.

The Department will be reaching out to stakeholders, asking them to provide input into the transition. Public input will help guide development of the new NDDEQ, with the goal of promoting efficiency, transparency and responsiveness as the agency works to protect the state's natural resources.

Frequently Asked Questions about the new NDDEQ:

Q: Where will the new offices be located?

A: The NDDEQ will be at the same location as the current Environmental Health Section 918 East Divide, Bismarck, N.D. No new buildings will be needed.

The Environmental Training Center and Laboratory Services buildings are located on east Main Street in Bismarck.

There also are two field offices located in Fargo and Towner, and employees are stationed at landfills in Gwinner and Sawyer.

Q: Will this change the work of the remaining sections of the Department of Health?

A: No, the other sections will continue to function as before, addressing human health issues. The Department of Health will be smaller in size.

Q: Will there be increased cost because of a new advisory board?

A: Not necessarily, because two other boards will be consolidated into the new board.

For more information about the new North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality, please call 701.328.5150.

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