

# Air & Waste Management Association Southern Section September 28, 2023

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**GA Environmental Protection Division  
Updates**



**Jeff Cown, Director**

# MISSION, VISION, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## Our mission is:

The Environmental Protection Division (EPD) protects and restores Georgia's environment. We take the lead in ensuring clean air, water and land. With our partners, we pursue a sustainable environment that provides a foundation for a vibrant economy and healthy communities.

## Our vision is:

Georgia's environment is healthy and sustainable. Natural resources are protected and managed to meet the needs of current and future generations.

All Georgians understand the importance of a healthy and sustainable environment and act to protect and restore it.

EPD is responsive, effective and efficient. Associates are valued and empowered to use their expertise and creativity as leaders in protecting Georgia's environment.

In fulfilling our mission and vision, in concert with the **mission and vision of the Department of Natural Resources**, EPD adheres to the following principles to guide our decisions and conduct:

- EPD serves the public by implementing state laws, rules, and policies to protect human health and the environment.
- EPD applies and enforces environmental laws and standards in a consistent, fair, and timely manner.
- EPD is proactive and results-oriented, and helps develop new approaches to meet Georgia's environmental challenges.
- Georgians have a right to and a responsibility for a healthy environment and the conservation of our natural resources.
- Georgia's environment consists of diverse ecosystems of interrelated and interdependent components, including people, plants, animals and their habitats, as well as air, water, and land.
- Environmental stewardship, protection of human health, and economic vitality are compatible and mutually beneficial goals.
- Effective environmental policy and management requires the use of comprehensive scientific and technical information to support clear, practical, well-documented, and timely decisions.
- External consultation, collaboration, and public involvement are essential to the development and implementation of effective policy.
- Education and understanding of environmental issues enables Georgians to become better environmental stewards.
- Communication and collaboration throughout EPD are priorities for accomplishing our mission. We conduct ourselves with honesty, integrity and professionalism; work as a team; and treat our fellow citizens and colleagues with respect.



## EPD - Who we are

Georgia EPD is the state agency charged with protecting Georgia's air, land and water resources through the authority of various state and federal environmental statutes.

- Implements and administers about two dozen state environmental laws
- Full permitting and enforcement authority for all major federal environmental laws including the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA – hazardous and solid waste management)

EPD regulates utilization of our air, water and land resources to protect health and promote economic growth, recreation, and ecology.

- Most agency functions are regulatory – establish and enforce rules and standards regarding water quality, water supply, drinking water safety, dam safety, air quality, solid waste, hazardous waste, surface mining, and underground storage tanks.
- Administers the Hazardous Waste Trust Fund and Solid Waste Trust Fund
- Licensing for some professions such as well drillers, landfill operator, and industrial radiography
- Maintains emergency response team capacity to respond to the release of hazardous or toxic materials on a 24-7 basis
- Operates laboratory capable of analyzing air, water, soil and biota for a large number of constituents to ensure compliance with state and federal environmental regulations



# Financing Environmental Protection

EPD's budget is small but can be complex – nearly 50 separate revenue sources, one being appropriated state funds.

Program (FY 2023 Base)	State	Federal	Other	Total
Environmental Protection	\$32,981,348	\$29,694,911	\$55,523,856	\$118,200,115
Hazardous Waste Trust Fund	7,620,376			7,620,376
Solid Waste Trust Fund	7,628,938			7,628,938
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$48,230,662</b>	<b>\$29,694,911</b>	<b>\$55,523,856</b>	<b>\$133,449,429</b>

**Federal Funds** include RCRA hazardous waste management support grants, CERCLA cleanup and remediation grants, Safe Drinking Water Act water system supervision grants, CWA water quality management grants, and Clean Air Act monitoring and control grants.

**Other Funds** retained by agency include Georgia Underground Storage Tank (GUST) fees, vehicle inspection and maintenance (I&M) fees, Title V air permitting fees, and drinking water lab fees.

Fees collected by agency but remitted to Treasury include scrap tire fees, solid waste fees, and hazardous waste fees.



# EPD Organization

Staffed by approximately 700 full-time employees, most who are environmental specialists, engineers, geologists, lab scientists, or modelers.

Branch/Office	FT Employees as of 1/8/23
Air Branch	138
Land Branch	182
Water Branch	179
District Offices	97
Laboratory	62
Administration	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>694*</b>

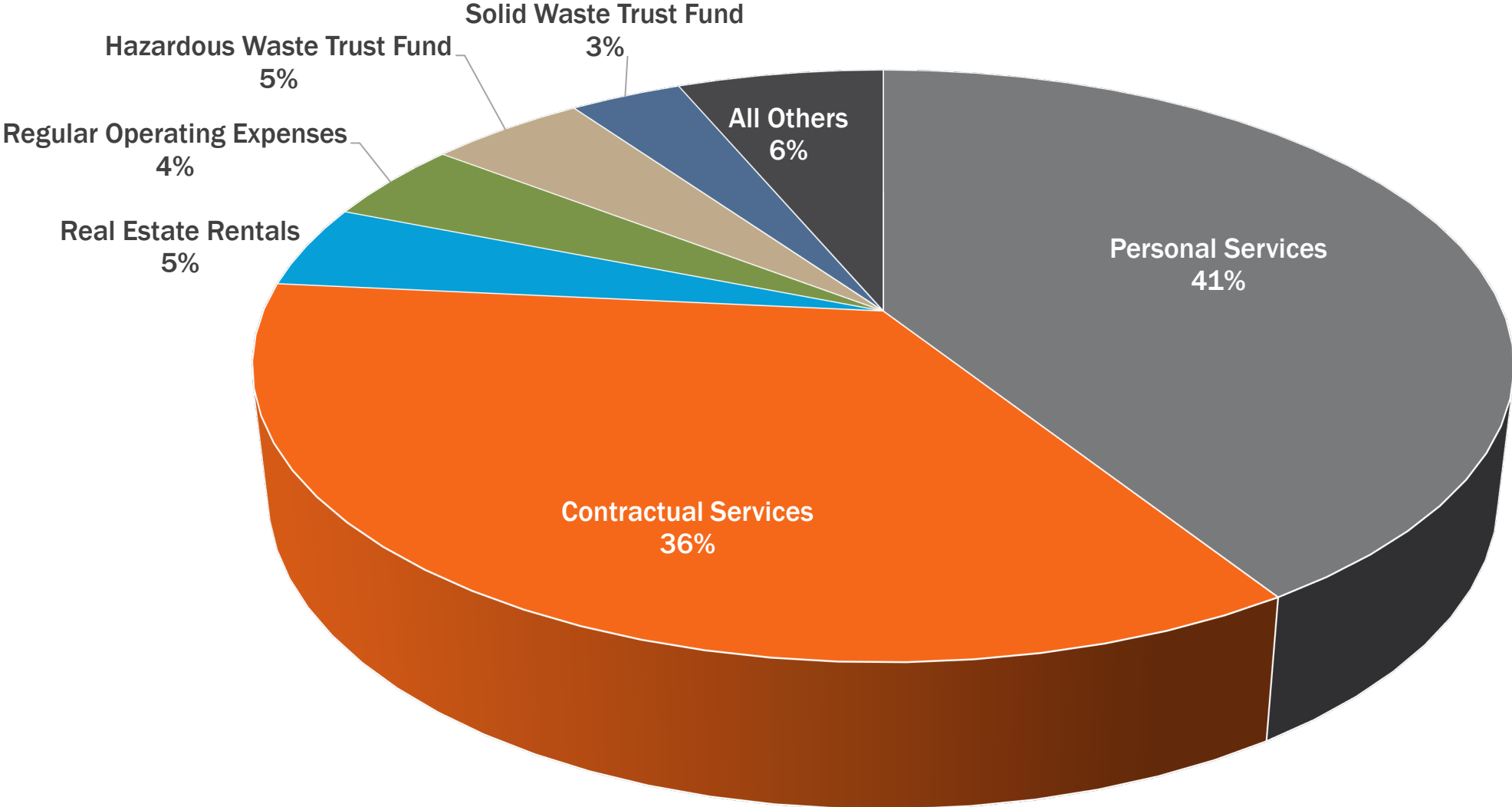
\* 3 additional positions funded by EPD but work for other Agencies.

## Locations:

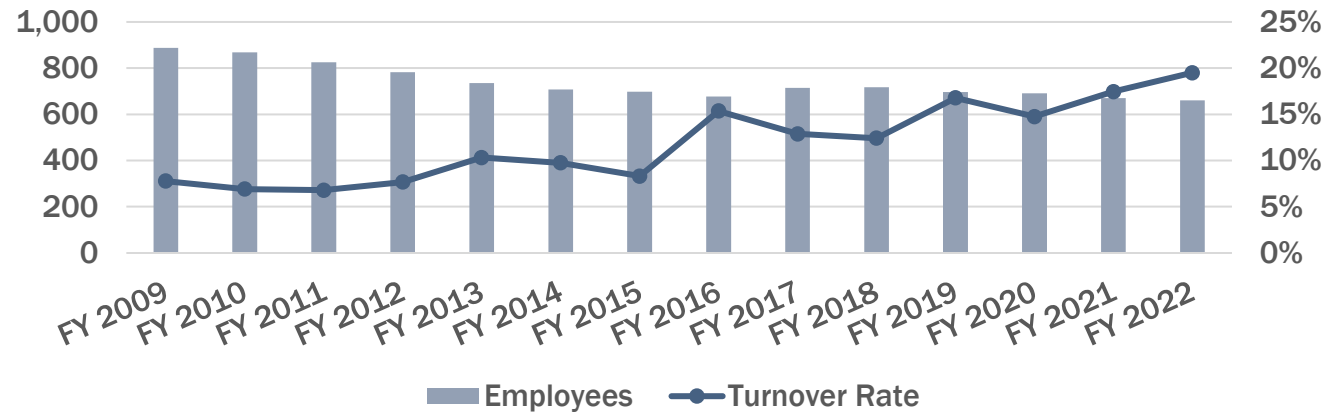
- **Branches and Administration** headquartered in Atlanta (Twin Towers, Ag Building and Tradeport)
- **Seven district offices** (Albany, Athens, Atlanta, Augusta, Brunswick, Cartersville and Macon) handle many complaint investigation, emergency response, inspection, and compliance activities.
- **Laboratory** in Peachtree Corners
- **Agriculture Water Permitting Offices** in Tifton and Dawson



# FY 2022 Expenditures by Object Class (Total Funds)



# Agency Staffing and Turnover



Over 80% of EPD employees are Environmental Engineers, Geologists, Environmental Compliance Specialists, Modelers, and Laboratory Scientists.

We **compete for talent** in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) career fields, with engineering and consulting firms in the private sector, and other public sector entities such as the U.S. EPA and local governments.

Over last three years:

- Air Protection Branch = over 40% turnover in staff
- Land Protection Branch = 53% turnover in staff, including over 2/3rd of its senior management
- Watershed Protection Branch = 75% turnover in staff
- District Operations = almost 50% turnover in staff
- Turnover among technical and management staff in several key programs higher than these averages.

In the first six months of FY23, EPD has experienced 61 separations (51 or almost 85% which were non-retirement) which would annualize into a 15.3% turnover rate.





# FY 2023 Pay Increases

- The General Assembly authorized \$5,000 COLA increase for all state employees effective July 1, 2022 (Total cost = \$5,446,894).
- The General Assembly also provided additional \$4,000 annual salary increases for Environmental Engineers and \$2,000 annual salary increases for Environmental Compliance Specialists effective July 1, 2022 (Total cost = \$1,712,657).
- Effective July 15, 2022, EPD internally redirected funds to finance \$2,000 increase for Geologists, Modelers, Lab Scientists, and front-line unit managers (Total cost = \$1,092,824).

Position	Old Starting Salary	New Starting Salary
Environmental Compliance Specialist	\$31,000	\$38,000
Engineer	\$45,000	\$54,000
Geologist	\$40,000	\$47,000
Modeler	\$50,000	\$59,000
Lab Scientist	\$32,339	\$39,339
Unit Manager	\$52,172	\$62,000

**Total additional funds invested in employee salaries = \$8.3M**





# By the Numbers: Air Protection Branch

## Permitting

- 2,868 sources with air quality permits:
  - 334 Title V sources
  - 762 synthetic minor sources
  - 1,772 minor (and permit by rule) sources

## Mobile Sources

- Over 3 million vehicles tested in 13-county area
- 710 inspection stations, with 819 test lanes
- Approx. 2000 inspectors are certified and performing tests

## Monitoring

- 35 Ambient Air Monitoring Sites in Georgia, monitoring for over 200 pollutants

## Radioactive Materials Program

- 543 licensees that use or possess radioactive materials



# AIR PROTECTION BRANCH TOP 3 ISSUES

- **PM2.5 NAAQS – Lower PM2.5 NAAQS may create new nonattainment areas. In attainment areas, it will be difficult to pass PM2.5 cumulative modeling for new PSD sources. Both scenarios may have a significant impact on economic development.**
- **Wood pellet facilities – Permitting is getting lots of scrutiny and adverse public comments. Also, there are a significant number of compliance issues.**
- **Community engagement – Trying to figure out the best way to engage with communities on ambient monitoring (air sensors), new permitting projects, and repeat compliance issues.**



# LAND PROTECTION BRANCH: BY THE NUMBERS

- **29,389** underground storage tanks at **8,545** facilities
- **6,580** scrap tire generators
- **5,304** hazardous waste handlers
- **53** RCRA permitted facilities
- **195** Active solid waste disposal facilities
  - **50** MSW
  - **39** C&D landfills
  - **70** inert landfills
- **313** closed landfills, **34** in closure plus **2500+** closed inert landfills
- **1015** solid waste collection operations
- **Over 786** active surface mining permits
- **469** Sites on the Hazardous Site Inventory
  - **64** abandoned sites
  - **132** municipal landfills
- **1412** Brownfields applications received (**725** final LOLs issued)
- **550+** Active hazardous site remediation projects
- **606** open, confirmed UST Releases
- **26** identified scrap tire piles under enforcement
- **177** VRP applications received, **168** approved, **81** remediated and delisted from HSI
- **17** NPL (Superfund) Sites
- **1,018** Firms licensed for lead-based paint abatement and renovation activities

# LAND PROTECTION TOP 3 ISSUES

- **Twin Pines Mineral Mining**
- **Coal Combustion Residuals**
- **Dedicated Funds into the HW and SW Trust Funds**



# By the Numbers: Watershed Protection Branch

## 70,000 water-related permits

- Water Withdrawal
  - Agriculture ~26,000
  - Non-farm ~800
- Safe Drinking Water - >2,400
- Wastewater - >1,500
- Stormwater
  - Municipal/DOD - 172
  - Industrial - ~2,900
- Erosion and Sediment Control - ~34,000
- Stream buffer variances - ~190/year
- Safe Dams
  - Category 1 - ~500
  - Category 2 - ~3,600

## 14 river basins & 7 major aquifer systems

- Surface Water Gaging
  - 400 Stream Gages
- Ground Water Well Monitoring
  - 160 Ground Water Wells
- Water Quality Monitoring
  - 250 Monitoring Sites
- Wetland Monitoring
  - 14 Wetlands Sites



# WATER PROTECTION BRANCH TOP 3 ISSUES

- **PFAS – Drinking Water & Managing Sources**
- **Managing Nutrients**
- **Reliable Water Supply – Managing SW & GW for all users**



# DISTRICT OPERATIONS TOP 3 ISSUES

- **Large Scale Developments – Warehouses and Solar Facilities for example**
- **Dealing with non-traditional materials including soil amendments, leachate, sludges, recovered materials, etc.**





# QUESTIONS?



## Contact Information

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