



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION

EPD DIRECTOR' S UPDATE

GIEC Annual General Membership Meeting



Rick Dunn
November 16, 2021

New EPD Leadership Staff

DEPARTURES

- Lauren Curry, now Chief Operating Officer, Office of the Governor
- Dika Kuoh, now with Delta Airlines
- Donald Kirkland, now Director of Public and Governmental Affairs, Georgia DNR

NEW ARRIVALS

- John Eunice – Appointed Deputy Director February 2021
- Jim Boylan – Air Protection Assistant Branch Chief, June 2021



Impact of Covid-19

AGENCY PRACTICES

- All EPD offices have remained open. Lab and emergency operations have been continuous.
- Records review has returned to normal, though appointments are still generally encouraged.
- Public hearings conducted via Zoom. Public participation levels are up.
- Permit issuance, rulemaking, and enforcement actions never impacted by virus but have been impacted by staff turnover.
- Field inspections and investigations were impacted by the virus. By the start of calendar year 2021, they were largely back to normal for all programs.

TELEWORK

- Prior to pandemic, about 50% of EPD employees teleworked, most 1 day per week. Currently, 95% of EPD employees are engaged in some form of remote work, most 3 days or more per week.
- Transitioned to Zoom phone, all employees have laptops and teleconferencing/collaboration software, and implemented electronic signature routing for all document review and approvals.
- Though EPD continues to work under an emergency telework directive, we will begin transitioning to more formal telework agreements with our employees after the new year.
- EPD Footprint on Capitol Hill/Twin Towers likely to be reduced.



Key State-Federal Issues

1. Public notice and comment processes for synthetic minor air permits.
2. EPA environmental justice priorities – strengthen enforcement in EJ communities, scrutiny of siting decisions, Title VI
3. EPA/EPD enforcement lead for delegated programs
4. Reconsideration of PM2.5 NAAQS
5. PFAS Strategic Roadmap and related decisions – water, land and air
6. WOTUS determinations/401 process

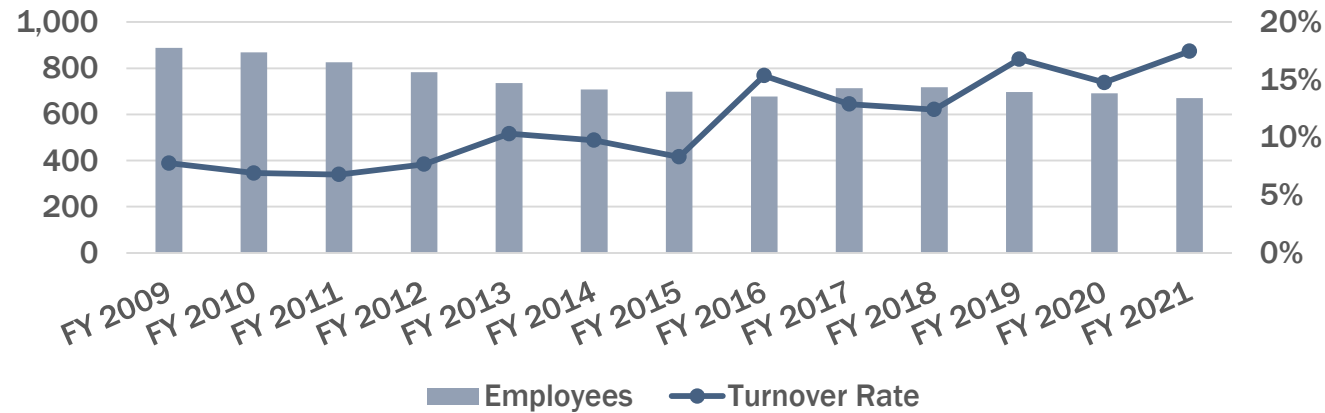


Key EPD ISSUES

1. PFAS in drinking water – new testing and exceedances of HAL
2. Future of GEOS
3. HAP emissions inventory, emissions from unexpected sources, EtO
4. Sludge management, disposal of high moisture content waste
5. Water supply – Lanier and Allatoona, ag use in southwest Georgia
6. ARPA/federal funds for water and sewer projects
7. Ozone NAAQS attainment
8. CCR disposal permits
9. Okefenokee mining proposal
10. Staff retention and turnover



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 two years:

- Air Protection Branch turnover = 30% turnover in staff
- Land Protection Branch = 37% turnover in staff, including over 2/3rd of its senior management
- Watershed Protection Branch = 36% turnover in staff
- District Operations = 23% turnover in staff
- Turnover among technical and management staff in several key programs higher than these averages.

In FY22 (through mid-October), EPD has experienced 65 separations which would annualize into a 29% turnover rate.

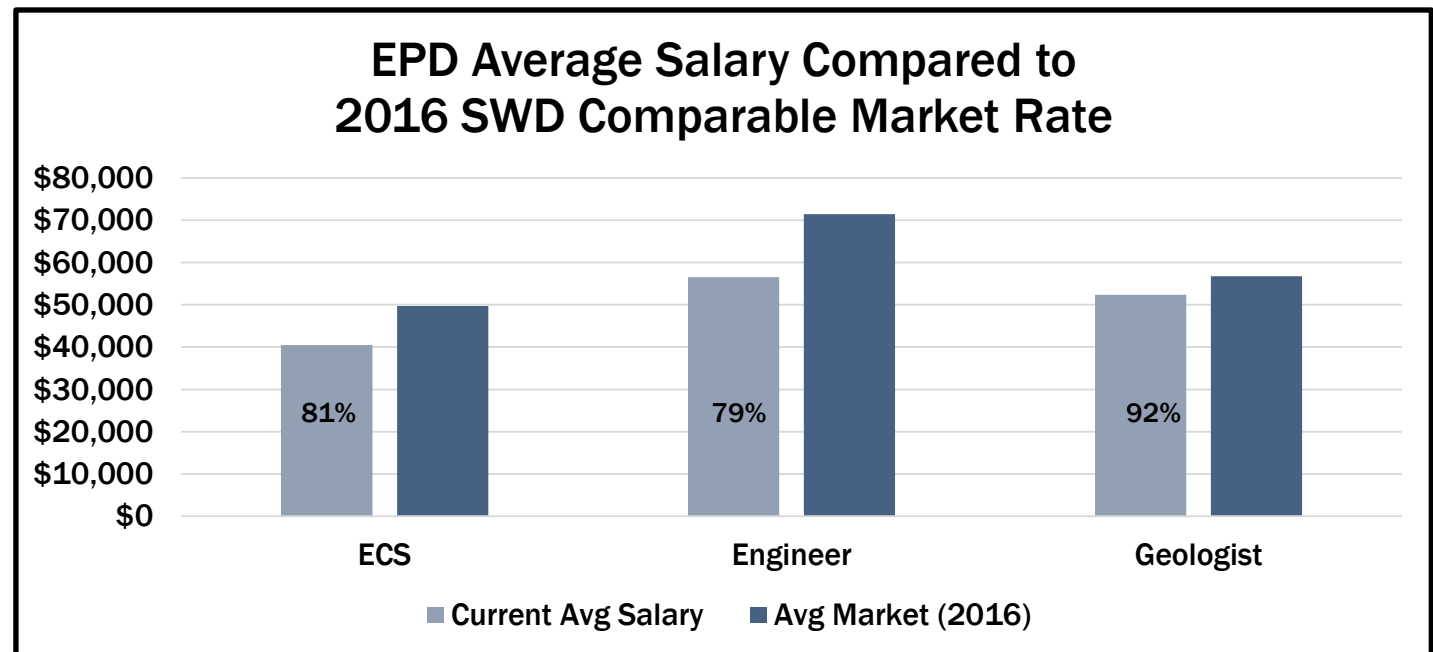


Most Departures Related to Pay

- Environmental Compliance Specialists, Engineers, and Geologists are leaving to accept similar positions in private sector or other local/state/federal government at a 20% - 100% salary increase.
- Last year, six managers of Land Branch programs (out of 22) left EPD to join US EPA, each with over a 20% pay increase (plus step increases) and less responsibility.
- On average, these positions make about 80% of the 2016 pay grade “market value” from the DOAS JCCP SWD Pay Structure.

Position	Current EPD Starting Salary	Hourly Rate Equivalent
Environmental Compliance Specialist	\$30,000	\$14.37
Engineer	\$43,000	\$20.60
Geologist	\$40,000	\$19.17

All of these positions require a Bachelor’s degree in a STEM field.



Impact Of HB 511 on Trust Fund Appropriations

HB 511 (2021) dedicates revenues from certain fees and taxes for specific purposes or programs, beginning in FY 2023. EPD fees dedicated under HB 511 include:

- \$1 replacement tire fee to the Solid Waste Trust Fund (SWTF).
- \$0.75 per ton tipping fee at landfills to the state to the Hazardous Waste Trust Fund (HWTF). Other fees associated with HWTF not dedicated in HB 511.

	SWTF	HWTF
Current Base (FY 22)	\$2,817,533	\$8,344,246
FY 21 Collections	7,628,938	7,615,376*
HB 511 Additions to Base (FY 23)	4,811,405	(728,870)

*** Annual solid waste tipping fees collected by program average about \$12M. In FY21, a larger number of payments than typical received from landfill operators after close of fiscal year (>\$8M) and are credited to the next fiscal year collections.**

Hazardous Waste Fees Requiring Reauthorization

Georgia Hazardous Site Response Act requires payment of fees by hazardous waste handlers and facilities that release hazardous substances.

- Both fees collected by EPD and remitted to Treasury to the credit of the general fund.
- Though associated with the HWTF, these fees are not dedicated in HB 511.

Hazardous Waste Management Fee is an annual fee assessed on facilities that generate, treat, store or dispose of hazardous waste.

- Just over 1,400 facilities are assessed the fee annually.
- Approximately 84% of these facilities pay the minimum fee of \$115/year. Maximum fee = \$75,000. FY21 collections = \$943,465

Hazardous Substance Reporting Fee is an annual fee for each facility reporting releases of hazardous substances.

- Around 450 facilities were assessed a hazardous substance reporting fee in FY2021.
- Around 39% were assessed the maximum release fee of \$1,725/year ($\leq 10,000$ lbs.); 22% assessed the \$1,150 fee/year ($\leq 1,000$ & $< 10,000$ lbs.), and 39% the \$575 fee/year ($< 1,000$ lbs.). FY21 collections = \$539,789.

Both fees are set to expire July 1, 2022. Average revenue to general fund = \$1.6M per year.

- Agency legislation submitted to reauthorize both fees.

