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REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

January 1996

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Recommendations for Consolidation of Administrative, Regional, and Support Functions

“The commissioners of the pollution control agency and natural resources shall develop recommendations for consolidation of the administrative, regional, and support functions of their respective agencies wherever feasible and expected to result in long-term overall cost reductions. By February 1, 1996, the commissioners shall jointly report the recommendations to the chairs of the senate environment and natural resources finance division and the house environment and natural resources finance committee.”

Minnesota Laws 1995 Chapter 220 Section 138

Areas of Study

Planning
Information Management
Fiscal Services
Materials Management
Office Services
Property Management

Public Information
Personnel/Human Resources
Equipment
Safety
Emergency Response
Regional Support

Areas of Recommendation	
INFORMATION SYSTEMS	STRATEGIC PLANNING
CO-LOCATION OF FIELD OFFICES	EMERGENCY RESPONSE
EMPLOYEE TRAINING	ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
FLEET MANAGEMENT	

General Observations about PCA and DNR

Mission

PCA mission: To protect Minnesota's environment to secure the quality of life of its citizens.

DNR mission: We will work with people to manage the state's natural resources for a sustainable quality of life.

In fulfilling their respective missions, the two agencies have significantly different roles and substantially different customers. The PCA is primarily an environmental regulatory agency with a large base of industrial and municipal customers, whereas DNR is predominately a natural resource land management agency with citizens who use the resources as their customer base.

Organization of Administrative, Regional and Support functions

Recognizing the difference in mission, the support functions of the two agencies differ significantly as well. For example, PCA has no need (or parallel staffing) for the DNR's Bureau of Engineering (facility design and construction, land surveying, etc.) or Bureau of Real Estate Management (realty functions associated with land acquisition, leasing, sales, exchange and payment in lieu of taxes). Instead, the organization, delivery, and location of support services in each agency matches the need and location of the internal customers for these services in each of the agencies.

Location of Services

The staffing distribution and location of operations for the two agencies is different as well. Most of the PCA staff (680) operate from a central office in St. Paul with the remaining 13% of staff (100) fairly evenly distributed in regional offices in Brainerd, Marshall, Detroit Lakes, Duluth and Rochester. In contrast, DNR staff distribution reveals that 20% (500) are located in the central office in St. Paul and the majority (2500) of the staff are located in 250 field offices throughout the state. Because of the smaller size of PCA field offices, most of the administrative support (personnel, accounting, information management, planning, and public information) is provided by central office whereas DNR has assigned support staff to its 6 regional offices.

Recommendations

Information Systems

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Action: Continue to pursue integration of GIS systems to include common data standards, compatible hardware and software systems and shared technology expertise

Benefit: Improve data accuracy and availability to citizens, avoid future costs for independent backup and equipment, improve productivity of staff

Computer infrastructure support

Action: Integrate computer infrastructure support activities including help desk, internet and public access, data and network management, and video conferencing

Benefit: Better protection of information assets, more efficient and effective services provided, increase in staff productivity

Strategic Planning

Action: Coordinate strategic planning initiatives to ensure a unified approach to environmental and natural resource issues

Benefit: State has non-competing priorities and citizens have a consolidated approach to environment protection and resource management

Co-location of Field Offices

Action: Continue to share resources at common locations and accelerate opportunities to co-locate regional staff

Benefit: Customers would have easier, less confusing access to staff
more efficient use of resources

Emergency Response

Action: Continue to coordinate use of the incident command model, share expertise and equipment.

Benefit: Fast, effective, efficient response to environmental and natural resource emergencies

Employee Training

Action: Deliver common skill, health and safety, and computer training opportunities for employees

Benefit: Economy of scale in the development and delivery of training services and increased learning opportunities.

Organizational Development

Action: Share and coordinate information about organizational alignment activities focused on a consolidated vision of environmental protection and natural resource management

Benefit: Employees in each agency become similarly aligned with the common vision

Fleet Management

Action: Examine feasibility of DNR providing fleet management services to PCA operations and expand the sharing of equipment

Benefit: Better management of fleet and lower costs if less equipment is necessary

Report Methodology

The list of functional areas to be studied was developed by DNR Assistant Commissioner Gene Gere (296-0533) and PCA Administrative Services Division Manager Elaine Johnson (296-7224.) Staff familiar with each area were given the responsibility to meet and develop data on current collaborative efforts, opportunities for consolidation and potential savings. The following factors were considered in developing recommendations: What was feasible and made good business sense? What would result in long-term overall cost reductions? What would result in more employee productivity? The project managers met to monitor progress, encourage further discussions and develop recommendations. Commissioners and senior managers met to review the study results, discuss conclusions and review final recommendations.