

A photograph of several wooden chess pawns on a white surface. The pawns are arranged in a line, and their shadows are cast long and dark to the right. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the wood and the smooth surface of the white background.

Department of Toxic Substances Control

Strategic Plan

2020 - 2024

Refresh

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“Our hope is that these and future successes will lead to change that will be felt by Californians wherever they live, work, and play.”

Director's Note

Since we first published our current Strategic Plan, DTSC has evolved into a very different department. DTSC has strengthened its operations through several initiatives that have resulted in meaningful progress on cleanup, permitting, enforcement, and safer consumer products. The department's fees have been restructured to provide adequate funding. A Board of Environmental Safety (BES) has been established to offer an important means of meeting DTSC's transparency and accountability goals and to give the communities we serve an opportunity to engage in new and meaningful ways. The state Legislature and Governor Newsom have invested an additional \$500 million in DTSC's work to clean up contamination in vulnerable communities. We are pleased with the trajectory of successes to date, but work remains. Our hope is that these and future successes will lead to change that will be felt by Californians wherever they live, work, and play.



Our Strategic Plan specifies five goals that our stakeholders agreed would lead to a stronger, more transparent, and accountable department. They are:

1. Building Strong Partnerships to collaborate with all stakeholders
2. Promoting Environmental Justice to prevent harm and protect the most vulnerable
3. Delivering High-Performing Programs and Services effectively and on time
4. Enhancing our Organizational Health so we are more inclusive, productive, and accountable
5. Improving our Fiscal Stewardship through greater transparency, fortified by secure and reliable funding

Each goal includes prioritized actions aimed at making measurable progress toward these goals. Since DTSC launched the Strategic Plan in 2020, the department accomplished 61 percent of its prioritized actions. We detail these accomplishments in Part II of this version of the Plan. At a high level, though, they have led to progress toward our goals in the following ways:

Strong Partnerships

DTSC has built stronger partnerships with key stakeholders by completing several prioritized actions to more thoroughly engage tribal communities, the regulated industry, elected officials, and communities. This was strongly evidenced by our collaborative work to pass DTSC reforms in 2021. We held regular



briefings and meetings with stakeholder groups to receive, discuss, and implement feedback – all of which led to a robust and comprehensive policy to address and codify major structural improvements to the department.

Environmental Justice

DTSC recognizes its critical role in achieving environmental justice for communities that have been long overburdened by multiple sources of contamination and pollution. We have implemented prioritized actions to improve staff perspective on racial inequity and have held interactive trainings and seminars to assess implicit bias, civil rights, and language access.

High Performing Programs & Services

DTSC prioritized a significant number of actions to improve delivery of its programs and services. To date, these completed actions have resulted in more than 1,000 cleared acres for community reuse; stronger, more effective, and legally enforceable permits; and full implementation of an electronic cost recovery management system that will hold responsible parties accountable and support cost recovery efforts.

Organizational Health

Foundational to DTSC’s recent improvements is intentional implementation of organizational health initiatives set forth by the first draft of our Strategic Plan. As a result, we have doubled the number of staff we bring on board each month, engaged staff and managers in a meaningful way about

DTSC initiatives and programmatic improvements, and increased key employee engagement metrics by 5 to 20 percent.

Fiscal Stewardship

DTSC has overhauled its fiscal management system to provide a more complete perspective on the department's financial processes, including budgets, contracts, business services, procurement, and accounting. We have launched an expenditure forecasting model that is tailored to the needs of individual programs within the department. Pivotal to the passage of the 2021 reform measures, DTSC finalized its core program workload analyses to provide transparency on how DTSC is using its resources, a foundational effort that led to the passage of DTSC governance and fiscal reforms in 2021 (SB 158).

As detailed in Part I, this updated Strategic Plan makes many changes to streamline and update prioritized actions we plan to complete before the end of Fiscal Year 2023-24. DTSC will continue to march toward success on our high-level goals by embedding meaningful public engagement in every program within the department; by developing and delivering community-science curricula; continuing to examine decision-making processes in our core programs; continuing our training initiatives to improve leadership and awareness of cultural diversity and to make DTSC an inclusive and safe place for marginalized groups.

This Plan is more than a statement of values; it is a promise to be a reliable and trustworthy steward of California's environment. We are committed to this Plan and prepared to be held accountable for our crucial work to reduce the impact of hazardous chemicals on all Californians and the environment.

While this update provides a snapshot of our accomplishments thus far, DTSC continues to implement this plan toward completion and to measure and update departmental progress through Key Performance Indicators, which are publicly accessible on our website. I invite community members, regulated communities, environmental and environmental justice advocates, and any other stakeholders to join us in a collaborative, interactive, and [data-driven](#) journey as we ensure that all of California is thriving in a healthy environment.

Meredith Williams, Director



Introduction

DTSC published its 2020-2024 Strategic Plan on March 10, 2021, with five overarching goals and subsequent prioritized action items with the aim of setting the direction and charting the course to move closer to our vision of all California thriving in a healthy environment. This updated Plan combines overlapping action items, adds new deliverables, and assesses the status of previously identified tasks. It merges prioritized action items that have a similar scope to better align DTSC's resources. Most important, this refresh more clearly describes how we will complete those actions and prioritizes those that have the greatest positive impact within DTSC and for our stakeholders.

This report includes two parts. First, DTSC shares its refreshed Strategic Plan. Through this Plan, we continue to underscore DTSC's service to California to ensure our environment and our communities are protected from toxic harm. This refresh has not altered the framework of the Plan and is still categorized by the five strategic goals. Second, this report shares DTSC's Strategic Plan accomplishments as of December of 2022. The accomplishments are demonstrated by completed prioritized action items, listed by goal.

DTSC's commitment to transparency to its stakeholders and the community at large is a constant, guiding principle. As we continue to implement this Plan, we will increase transparency and accountability, and we will make it easier for the public to track our progress on the specific actions and performance measures through DTSC's website. We look forward to your collaboration as we continue to build stronger partnerships, promote environmental justice, build high-performing programs and services, and develop a healthier organization that is a transparent steward of your fiscal resources.

DTSC's Mission is to protect California's people, communities, and environment from toxic substances, to enhance economic vitality by restoring contaminated land, and to compel manufacturers to make safer consumer products.

Our Core Values

The foundation of this Strategic Plan is our set of shared Core Values. These values will be reflected in our interactions with each other, our stakeholders, and the communities we serve.

Respect

- Support each other's worth and dignity, regardless of background, abilities, or beliefs.
- Be aware of and honor others' rights and feelings.
- Value others' experiences, viewpoints, and personalities.
- Encourage others' growth and development.

Leadership

- Energize teams and create a sense of direction, purpose, excitement, and momentum for DTSC's Mission.
- Cultivate a culture where team members know their purpose and roles in delivering on DTSC's Mission.
- Champion a culture of learning, continuous development, and accountability.
- Foster employee engagement through regular communication and interaction.

Teamwork

- Create a positive work environment and work collaboratively to achieve results.
- Leverage diverse and individual strengths among employees.
- Champion respect, recognition, and praise within the team.
- Build trust and follow through on our commitments.

Quality and Professionalism

- Strive for excellence in skills and delivery of services across all the Department's career paths.
- Be responsive.
- Encourage and support innovation, ideas, and approaches to continuously improve services and other deliverables throughout DTSC.
- Deliver services according to realistic milestones, adhere to measurable performance objectives, and follow through on them.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- Actively promote diversity. Diversity is the presence of differences.
- Foster inclusiveness among DTSC employees and the people and communities we serve. Inclusion means truly inviting diversity.
- Challenge systems and processes that contribute to inequity. Equity is about promoting justice and fairness.

Integrity

- Be honest and accountable to ourselves, our colleagues, and communities.
- Set high standards for individual behavior and commit to them, even in difficult situations.
- Learn from mistakes and losses; seize the opportunity to improve.

Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan Goals

What We Do

DTSC's Mission is to protect California's people, communities, and environment from toxic substances, to enhance economic vitality by restoring contaminated land, and to compel manufacturers to make safer consumer products.

Why We Do It

DTSC's Vision is all of California thriving in a healthy environment.

Goals

DTSC will meet its Mission by working toward five long-term strategic goals – broad statements of what we aim to achieve, which give definition to our Mission and Vision – for the duration of the Strategic Plan:

- We will build **Strong Partnerships** to collaborate with all stakeholders.
- We will promote **Environmental Justice** to prevent harm and protect the most vulnerable.
- We will deliver **High-Performing Programs and Services** to deliver on our Mission effectively and on time.
- We will enhance our **Organizational Health** to be inclusive, productive, and accountable.
- We will improve our **Fiscal Stewardship** to use transparent fiscal practices and secure reliable funding.

Objectives and Actions

Each goal is supported by medium-term objectives that may take two to three years to achieve. Objectives are measurable and have tangible outcomes. Nested under the objectives are shorter-term actions that will take approximately six months to two years to accomplish. Actions are one-time efforts that lead to accomplishing the objectives. For the duration of this Strategic Plan, objectives will be updated or refreshed annually. As actions are completed, more prioritized actions will be added. The architecture of the Plan provides continuity and allows for flexibility and adaptability as circumstances change.

Measuring Progress

The Strategic Plan's goals, objectives, and actions will include associated key performance indicators, or KPIs. These KPIs are specific targets for measuring our progress toward our objectives and goals. DTSC is committed to transparency and will communicate progress on a performance dashboard featured on DTSC's website. The periodic reporting of KPIs will allow the public and our staff to hold DTSC accountable, and the information will be used to determine whether adjustments to, or the addition of, action items will be necessary to reach established targets.

Managing the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan requires governance and a management framework where clear decisions are made and implemented. A Strategic Governance Committee, made up of DTSC's Executive Team and other individuals from management, meet on a regular basis to discuss progress, address issues, set priorities, and make strategic decisions. DTSC has appointed a goal steward for each strategic goal. The stewards' leads a goal team that is responsible for implementing actions that support the goal objectives, while remaining accountable to the Strategic Governance Committee. The goal teams are comprised of cross-functional DTSC staff who develop workplans for each action to ensure that the action is delivered on time. The Strategic Governance Committee also ensures that DTSC's Strategic Plan is aligned with the overarching goals of the California Environmental Protection Agency's strategic plan, and seeks synergies where aligning efforts of all CalEPA's boards, departments and offices, will have a greater combined effect.

Part 1: Strategic Plan Refresh



 **GOAL 1:
STRONG PARTNERSHIPS**

Summary

DTSC works directly in communities to clean up hazardous substances. We work with businesses to ensure they manage, store, and transport hazardous substances safely. We work with manufacturers to drive the development of safer products and to reduce toxic substances in commerce, and ultimately, hazardous waste. In all these engagements, DTSC depends on the shared expertise of other government entities, nongovernmental organizations, the businesses we regulate, and community partners to make well-informed decisions that consider diverse viewpoints.

To make the right decisions, we must continue to strengthen these partnerships and develop trust.

Objectives And Actions

A. We will be transparent and cultivate public understanding of our work by meeting with stakeholders and providing them with opportunities to be involved early in our processes. We will provide clarity to communities, regulated businesses, tribes, and other government stakeholders about our processes and involve them in our decision-making.

Prioritized Actions

1. Embed public engagement in all DTSC programs by providing internal training on public participation, EJ, and tribal affairs, and updating all project planning documents that include public engagement activities in their scope. Improve our community engagement by adopting best practices. Develop metrics that more accurately indicate improvements in community trust, our follow-through on commitments, and strength of relationships. (December 2023)
2. Expand opportunities for community members to meet with DTSC and participate in our decision-making and actions detailed in the Strategic Plan. (December 2023)
3. Engage stakeholders in regulatory proposals and decisions and be transparent about how their input is incorporated into DTSC's decision-making. (December 2023)

B. We will provide access to clear, relevant, and timely information. This includes providing information in plain language, making more information available in languages other than English, providing easily searchable and accessible online information, and connecting the public with knowledgeable and responsive staff. This will help our partners understand what we are doing, why we are doing it, and how to be part of the process.

Prioritized Actions

1. Improve our response time in acknowledging stakeholders' requests through better tracking and clear performance metrics and standards. (March 2023)

C. We will strengthen government partnerships to find coordinated solutions that prevent and address contamination in air, soil, and water. Because many environmental problems span multiple

responsible agencies, we will do this by leveraging resources, sharing data and expertise, and using complementary legal authorities.

Prioritized Actions

1. Develop norms for how and when to collaborate with local, state, federal, and tribal agencies to bring a more holistic approach to address crosscutting problems and identify and implement solutions. (December 2023)
2. Commit to a stronger Biomonitoring California effort for assessing human exposure to current contaminants and chemicals of emerging concern. (December 2023)

D. We will build capacity to engage tribal nations and communities consistently, effectively, and respectfully. By engaging tribal governments and indigenous communities in the development of policies, programs, and projects, we will deepen our understanding of and responsiveness to the current realities of tribes in California. We will train staff on tribal histories and indigenous environmental justice so that DTSC can engage directly and effectively with tribes. With increased understanding of the history of tribal nations, along with federal and state laws, DTSC can better support tribes in protecting their cultural resources, public health, and environment.

Prioritized Actions

1. Improve the timeliness of tribal engagement activities for new and existing projects in an effort to improve the quality and effectiveness of our government-to-government relationship(s). (December 2023)
2. When conducting projects, better integrate cultural resources management expertise (either from an internal resource pool or external contract resources) in our tribal engagement activities. (December 2023)

E. We will partner with regulated businesses, provide them with current information, and educate them on their responsibilities to comply with hazardous waste statutes and regulations. This type of partnership increases compliance, reduces violations, and helps better protect communities and the environment.

Prioritized Actions

1. Expand training for hazardous waste transporters and electronic-waste handlers. (July 2024)
2. Update and create new fact sheets to help Californians comply with laws and regulations that protect people, communities, and the environment from harmful chemicals. (June 2023)
3. Establish learning opportunities for hazardous waste training courses for Certified Unified Program Agencies and the regulated community. (July 2024)

F. We will be proactive in communicating clear requirements and expectations for businesses seeking a permit or permit renewal. This involves providing clear expectations for the content of permit applications, providing concise descriptions of the permitting process, and clarifying the rules and requirements applicable to their operations.

Prioritized Actions

- DTSC staff completed all Prioritized Actions for this objective prior to the Strategic Plan refresh.

G. We will leverage stakeholder knowledge to gather useful information and inform decisions in the Safer Consumer Products program. We will also ensure stakeholders have access to clear, relevant, and timely information, and that they understand the basis for SCP decision-making.

Prioritized Actions

1. Develop a comprehensive communications plan for SCP that includes communication assessment, active engagement with key stakeholders, creative outreach methods, and decision transparency. Establish a system to provide tracking of program activities and to track and address stakeholder feedback. (June 2023)



GOAL 2: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

There are communities in California that lack access to clean air, water, land, and the basic resources needed to lead healthy lives. DTSC will be guided by environmental justice principles and actions to expand opportunities and remove barriers for those who have been historically marginalized. A more equitable California is one in which no single community bears an unfair burden of pollution, and in which all communities have access to healthy places to live, work, and play.

To grapple with environmental inequities, we must start by recognizing that past local, state, and federal government decisions have led to unfair distribution of pollution across our state. Under this goal, DTSC will convene conversations where community and indigenous voices can be heard by decision-makers, and where honest dialogue can take place. We will create and enhance partnerships that focus on community-led solutions. We will increase effective communications and use our legal authorities alongside analytical tools to support just outcomes. DTSC will pursue environmental justice to improve environmental and public health outcomes now and for generations to come.

Objectives And Actions

A. We will meet our civil rights obligations and improve access to resources. This process starts with asking communities and tribes how we can best partner in ways that are appropriate, respectful, and helpful. We will promote open dialogue with affected communities to better understand their needs, proactively pursue opportunities to meet those needs, and openly share our limitations. We will improve access to technical information and expand public involvement in environmental decision-making.

Prioritized Actions

1. Develop and publish draft public engagement strategies that include regular opportunities to communicate with staff and executive leadership. (June 2023)
2. Develop a community and workforce development program for promoting local hiring and training across projects where DTSC provides oversight. The program will include policies for local hiring requirements in contracts and services and for seeking resources to support training programs tailored to community needs. (July 2023)

B. We will integrate community knowledge and other forms of environmental justice research and data into our decision-making. Recognizing community knowledge – including traditional, local, and indigenous knowledge – helps grow partnerships and results in government serving communities better. This type of knowledge is based on the observations and personal experiences of community members and often yields a more holistic approach to defining and solving problems.

Prioritized Actions

1. Develop tools for community members to increase communication knowledge of community science, and bring transparency to how it will be used in DTSC’s decision-making process. (December 2023)
2. Develop guidance document with DTSC core programs that provide a framework for how to collect, curate, and incorporate community science into the Department’s decision-making process. (December 2023)
3. Develop and share annual updates of equity and environmental justice aspects of this Strategic Plan, inviting feedback on further opportunities for policies, legal and resources analyses, program actions, and training. (June 2023)

C. We will identify cumulative impacts in the communities we serve and will incorporate solutions to better protect vulnerable groups. In pursuing environmental justice, DTSC’s decisions must consider the cumulative impacts of pollution, health disparities, and other social vulnerabilities on affected communities. We will be accessible, reliable, and responsive where community concerns are voiced.


Prioritized Actions

1. Host additional stakeholder roundtables on implementing cumulative impact, community vulnerability, and environmental justice criteria for use in cleanup activities. These roundtables will include communities, scientists, academia, nonprofit organizations, tribes, and local governments. (December 2023)
2. Propose regulations on cumulative impact and community vulnerability criteria for use in permitting decisions. (March 2023)
3. Increase the number of grants, loans, and other resource investments in vulnerable communities through collaboration with local, state, federal, and tribal partnerships. These resource investments may come through DTSC’s direct resources or through facilitating effective partnerships with others. (June 2023)
4. Identify processes for prioritizing environmental restoration activities to reduce racial disparities. (October 2023)

D. We will prevent harm while working to protect and restore California’s most vulnerable and environmentally burdened communities. We understand that how we approach our work is just as important as what we seek to accomplish. Equity means being racially just and inclusive and consistently taking action to eliminate the root causes of inequities. We will adopt policies and standards that will enable us to consistently engage with stakeholders from California’s most vulnerable and environmentally burdened communities, and we will strive to achieve equitable outcomes. To achieve equitable outcomes, we will develop a plan to integrate and implement pro-equity practices in our major programs where we can effect change, including: 1) leadership, operations & services; 2) plans, policies & budgets; 3) community partnerships; and 4) public participation, communication & education.

Prioritized Actions

1. Develop a policy on Equity that guides DTSC’s behaviors and activities and that clearly states DTSC’s commitment to treating people and communities uniquely to compensate for different circumstances and consequent need for help. (June 2023)
2. Develop and implement a Racial Equity Framework and Implementation Plan that documents DTSC equity commitments and adapts over time to reflect community feedback and growth in the department’s understanding of which actions are working to address historic inequity experienced by our most vulnerable communities. (October 2023)
3. Develop and track equity-based metrics in partnership with equity-based organizations to bring transparency to DTSC’s commitments and progress. (September 2023)
4. Create an Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (EJAC) for the purpose of establishing comprehensive strategies and identifying best practices related to issues of equity, environmental justice, health disparities, hazardous waste management, cleanups in vulnerable communities and cumulative risks. (June 2023)

 **GOAL3:
HIGH-PERFORMING
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

Summary

We will continue to improve on the delivery of our core services, including cleanup oversight, enforcement actions, inspections, permit decisions, protection against toxic products, regulation development, and emergency response. This will support better compliance by businesses, and communities will have more confidence in the work we do. To accomplish this, we must update antiquated internal business processes and find ways to improve the efficiency of our work, such as:

- Continuing to examine the decision-making processes in our core programs to improve their timeliness by alleviating bottlenecks and eliminating procedures that don’t add value
- Improving our technology and facility infrastructure to ensure programs have the necessary foundation and tools to deliver essential services
- Upgrading old paper-driven processes to online, automated platforms that streamline our workflow across programs
- Conducting workload studies to measure resource requirements for delivery of core services.
- Using a strategic process to rank priorities and adjust resource allocation to align with prioritized workload
- Collaborating with experts and using the best science available to make decisions

DTSC initiated a Data Empowerment Committee, represented by all departmental programs, to track, manage, and maintain data and Key Performance Indicators, related to this Strategic Plan. The initiation of this effort will facilitate the accelerated decision-making process by allowing staff to have direct access to data that is accurate, consistent, secure, and aligned with the prioritized objectives.

Objectives and Actions

A. We will accelerate decision-making by implementing streamlined processes for regulation development, permitting decisions, criminal investigations, site cleanups, and prioritization of products for which safer alternatives should be sought.

Prioritized Actions

- DTSC staff completed all Prioritized Actions for this objective prior to the Strategic Plan refresh.

B. We will improve processes and tools to enable staff to meet program objectives.

Prioritized Actions

1. Identify inconsistencies and inefficiencies in project management practices and develop a process improvement plan. (December 2023)

C. We will streamline workload and data tracking to improve resource management and project planning.

Prioritized Actions

1. Establish a data governance framework and create a data analysis unit for data architecture, management, and standards to support critical business processes, manage risks, and establish transparency through analytical measures. Leverage model from Water Board and adapt for DTSC purposes. (December 2023)
2. Design and implement a Project Approval Lifecycle process to upgrade/replace the Laboratory Information Management System in DTSC's Environmental Chemistry Laboratory to ensure its data are secure and of maximum use to DTSC. (June 2025)

D. We will use a systematic governance process to prioritize DTSC's programs and services and ensure alignment with strategic priorities and available resources.

Prioritized Actions

1. Publish program-level strategic plans in alignment with approved DTSC Strategic Plan. Plans will be required from all core programs, as well as from Administrative Services, the Office of Environmental Information Management, and the Office of Communications. (December 2023)

E. We will use the best available scientific methods, engage experts across scientific disciplines, and provide clear and accessible scientific information in our risk communication, technical reports, and data presentations.

Prioritized Actions

1. Engage in scientific studies and collaborate with researchers and other governmental organizations on an ongoing basis to support the state's chemical management policies. Establish memoranda of understanding, if needed, to share data with other organizations, and create staff-level working groups to coordinate collaboration. (June 2024)
2. Improve staff access to emerging science and scientific articles. (June 2023)
3. Enhance the services of the DTSC Environmental Chemistry Laboratory to improve the delivery of laboratory results in alignment with other DTSC programs' strategic priorities. (June 2023)



Orchard Supply Company (Brownfields Cleanup Site) • Sacramento, CA

4. Develop policies and procedures for use of split samples, blind samples, and lab and field audits, and for data verification, validation, and usability assessments. (June 2024)
5. Develop and implement tools, training, and resources to assist staff in the use of plain language in scientific documents and communications. Require formal reports to include an executive summary that can be understood at a high school reading level while maintaining scientific rigor. (June 2023)
6. Provide opportunities for visiting scholars, students, and the public to observe or collaborate with DTSC's Environmental Chemistry Laboratory, the Cleanup Program Special Initiative Work or Research Efforts, Safer Consumer Products, and/or other programs. Regularly participate in scientific meetings, symposia, conferences, and forums. Organize DTSC-hosted scientific meetings, symposiums, conferences, and forums. (June 2024)

F. We will streamline DTSC's voluntary cleanup process to efficiently support the return of brownfields to productive use in a timely manner, while maintaining rigorous decision-making that protects communities and the environment.

Prioritized Actions

- DTSC staff completed all Prioritized Actions for this objective prior to the Strategic Plan refresh.

G. We will streamline enforcement to improve DTSC's ability to hold violators of Hazardous Waste Control Laws accountable.

Prioritized Actions

1. Develop and implement technology solutions, such as obtaining and using field tablets, developing software, and creating a process to transfer tablet field data to databases, such as EnviroStor, to streamline the inspection report process. (July 2024)

 **GOAL 4:
ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH**

Summary

Approximately 1,000 employees contribute their time and talents to DTSC's Mission, bringing their scientific expertise and professional and administrative skills to work. Employees contribute to an organization's mission when they are provided the resources necessary to perform their jobs, the training needed to foster personal and professional growth, and clear expectations with feedback on performance.

In effective organizations, executives and managers support and build trust with employees by communicating frequently, being transparent, collaborative, and visible, and following through on commitments. Leadership and staff all play a vital role in advancing DTSC's Mission in service to California's environment and communities.

The following objectives and actions will help create an organizational culture dedicated to excellence, accountability, and performance. Success in implementing these actions will position DTSC in the long term to recruit and retain fully engaged, qualified staff who are dedicated to achieving our Mission.

Objectives And Actions

A. We will recruit, develop, and retain a highly diverse and effective workforce committed to professional excellence and delivering on DTSC's Mission.

Prioritized Actions

- DTSC staff completed all Prioritized Actions for this objective prior to the Strategic Plan refresh.

B. We will improve internal communication channels to enhance employee engagement with consistent, timely information. We will facilitate methods for DTSC staff to communicate their innovative ideas and perspectives about program improvements, and to provide feedback on management effectiveness.

Prioritized Actions

- DTSC staff completed all Prioritized Actions for this objective prior to the Strategic Plan refresh.

C. We will ensure employee field, laboratory, and office safety and promote employee health, safety, and well-being by implementing best practices to minimize employee illnesses and injuries. We will support employee health and well-being with improved policies and procedures to support worker safety.

Prioritized Actions

- DTSC staff completed all Prioritized Actions for this objective prior to the Strategic Plan refresh.

D. We will build a professional, inclusive workplace where staff feel heard, supported, and valued. We will enhance staff's understanding of what it means to be inclusive in their delivery of programs and services to diverse communities.

Prioritized Actions

1. Provide training to enhance awareness of cultural diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. (June 2024)
 2. Develop and implement program-level plans that make DTSC an inclusive and safe place for marginalized groups. (June 2024)
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GOAL 5: FISCAL STEWARDSHIP

Summary

DTSC will be a responsible steward of fee revenues by being fiscally mindful and transparent with our resources. To deliver on our Mission, we must strategically plan for DTSC's budgetary needs and work with regulated businesses to create a sustainable funding model that is aligned with our statutory and strategic priorities. We will seek to establish a fee system that facilitates revenue forecasts and minimizes overhead costs associated with fee collection. We will work with stakeholders to establish a fee system with adequate flexibility to respond to changing statutory mandates.

Objectives And Actions

A. We will implement a strategic budget planning process that prioritizes resource allocation.

Prioritized Actions

1. Assist programs with developing strategies for reallocating resources to address unanticipated demands. Maintain ongoing assessment of aligning resources with unfunded statutory mandates and priorities. Anticipate and partner with the Board of Environmental Safety. (April 2023)
2. Develop and implement a structure to hold executives and managers accountable for expenditures within their purview through quarterly executive budget meetings to evaluate expenditures aligned with departmental priorities. (June 2023)

B. We will work with stakeholders to develop and maintain a financial model that ensures DTSC programs and services are funded to support core activities and strategic initiatives and that is flexible enough to provide for future changes in statutory requirements.

Prioritized Actions

1. Implement processes for tracking workload on an ongoing basis to ensure Department resources are allocated efficiently and strategically, as well as to support future budget requests. (January 2024)
2. Conduct an analysis of revenue collection to identify strategies to reduce costs and improve collection rates. (March 2024)

C. We will improve our financial management tools to ensure prudent stewardship of budgeted resources to meet operational needs.

Prioritized Actions

1. Evaluate the impacts of and opportunities arising from the changing telework environment on DTSC operations, such as those related to our provision of services to California communities, personnel management, space requirements, IT and equipment needs, and travel demands. (February 2024)

Part 2: Strategic Plan Accomplishments



Since DTSC published the Strategic Plan in 2021, the department has completed 61 percent of the Plans prioritized actions, leading to continued progress toward our goal of building stronger stakeholder partnerships, strengthening environmental justice in vulnerable communities, increasing internal performance and fiscal responsibility, and improving the well-being of DTSC staff. These projects, while complete, will be monitored to better understand departmental strengths and weaknesses.

This supplemental report lists those 67 completed actions by goal. We present each goal and objective in their original language, followed by the prioritized actions we have accomplished.

 **GOAL 1:
STRONG PARTNERSHIPS**

In our effort to cultivate public understanding of our work, we believe we have greatly increased lines of communication with stakeholders and have become more accessible. In some cases, we have received feedback confirming this. We engage more frequently than in the past, including with the Legislature, regulated industry, and community-based organizations – which became evident during our efforts to inform and ultimately pass DTSC’s governance and fiscal reform policies in 2021. In other cases, we acknowledge that our relationships need improvement. Environmental Justice stakeholders tell us our improved accessibility is not translating to better policies and improved experiences in communities. In response, we have put in place measures to monitor our progress toward these goals.

Outreach activities provide us with opportunities to continue to improve public access and visibility into our programs and services. With the objective of forming stronger and healthier partnerships, we have held approximately 80 public meetings with more than 5,300 participants. These include Quarterly Public Forums, Board of Environmental Safety meetings, and project public meetings. Engaging tribal communities, the regulated industry, environmental and environmental justice advocates, other regulatory agencies, and the public allows us to hear important voices and to build consensus.

Objective B: We will provide access to clear, relevant, and timely information. This includes providing information in plain language, making more information available in languages other than English, providing easily searchable and accessible online information, and connecting the public with knowledgeable and responsive staff. This will help our partners understand what we are doing, why we are doing it, and how to be part of the process.

Completed Action

1. Update DTSC's civil rights and language access guidance and increase the availability of information in relevant languages other than English.

Objective D: We will build capacity to consistently, effectively, and respectfully engage tribal nations and communities. By engaging tribal governments and indigenous communities in the development of policies, programs, and projects, we will deepen our understanding of and responsiveness to the current realities of tribes in California. We will train staff on tribal histories and indigenous environmental justice so that DTSC can engage directly and effectively with tribes. With increased understanding of the history of tribal nations, along with federal and state laws, DTSC can better support tribes in protecting their cultural resources, public health, and environment.

Completed Action

2. Adopt a tribal consultation policy that outlines principles, values, and guidance for interactions with tribes. This policy will call for early and consistent tribal engagement to help us better support tribes in protecting their cultural resources, environment, and health.

Objective F: We will be proactive in communicating clear requirements and expectations for businesses seeking a permit or permit renewal. This involves providing clear expectations for the content of permit applications, providing concise descriptions of the permitting process, and clarifying the rules and requirements applicable to their operations.

Completed Actions

3. Establish and sustain a point of contact with businesses to answer questions about regulatory requirements.
4. Contact all permittees approaching the end of their authorization periods to remind them of the expiration date and include helpful information about submitting a renewal application.
5. Meet with all permit holders approaching the end of their authorization periods to discuss any changes in planned operations, DTSC's expectations for the content of the permit application, and what to expect in the permitting process.
6. Meet with all new permit applicants to discuss planned operations, DTSC's expectations for the content of the permit application, and what to expect in the permitting process.

Objective G: We will leverage stakeholder knowledge to gather useful information and inform decisions in the Safer Consumer Products program. We will also ensure stakeholders have access to clear, relevant, and timely information, and that they understand the basis for SCP decision-making.

Completed Actions

7. Establish an online SCP Program Project Dashboard for key SCP projects that provides information on the scope, schedules, and status of projects.
8. Establish an online SCP Program Project Dashboard for key SCP projects that provides links to the CalSAFER web portal.
9. Establish an online SCP Program Project Dashboard for key SCP projects that identifies outreach efforts, comment periods, information sources, supporting documents for decision-making and opportunities for stakeholder engagement (workshops, webinars, etc.).

 **GOAL 2:
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

We are in the midst of a shift in cultural awareness, and with awareness comes humility. Since we began crafting this Strategic Plan in 2019, national tragedies have greatly heightened our awareness of the impact inequity is having on our society. DTSC has also been evolving in how we understand environmental justice and the criticality of using an equity lens when delivering our programs and services. This evolution was and continues to be necessary to enable meaningful progress on this goal. While environmental justice has become our most important goal, unfortunately, it is the one on which we have made the least progress. Nonetheless, we are committed to doing better by all communities and are redoubling our efforts to expedite progress.

DTSC is committed to providing access to clear, relevant, and timely information for all Californians. An important step was posting our Language Access Policy and our Title VI and CA Civil Rights policies to our website in Spanish. DTSC will continue to translate and share relevant information in plain language, making more information available in languages other than English, providing easily searchable and accessible online information, and connecting the public with knowledgeable and responsive staff. This will help our partners understand what we are doing, why we are doing it, and how to be part of the process.

Additionally, DTSC is putting into action one of the boldest Environmental Justice budget initiatives in California history. This Cleanup in Vulnerable Communities Initiative (CVCI) funds DTSC's discovery, investigation, and cleanup of contaminated properties; a grant program to fund response actions at brownfield sites; and a work development and training program to promote public health, community engagement, and equity, while supporting local economies. In the first year of its enactment, we have already distributed \$76.8 million in grants to fund the assessment and cleanup of properties, empowering communities to reclaim blighted land for safe and productive uses.

Objective A: We will meet our civil rights obligations and improve access to resources. This process starts with asking communities and tribes how we can best partner in ways that are appropriate, respectful, and helpful. We will promote open dialogue with affected communities to better understand their needs, proactively pursue opportunities to meet those needs, and openly share our limitations. We will improve access to technical information and expand public involvement in environmental decision-making.

Completed Action

10. Develop a staff training program on DTSC's civil rights and language access guidance.

Objective C: We will identify cumulative impacts in the communities we serve and will incorporate solutions to better protect vulnerable groups. In pursuing environmental justice, DTSC's decisions must consider the cumulative impacts of pollution, health disparities, and other social vulnerabilities on affected communities. We will be accessible, reliable, and responsive where community concerns are voiced.

Completed Actions

11. Publish a report that summarizes DTSC’s participation in regional environmental justice task forces and IVAN (the Identifying Violations Affecting Our Neighborhoods environmental monitoring system). DTSC will share this report with task forces and ask for recommendations on how we can improve our participation. (Ongoing)
12. Publish a regulatory framework for implementing cumulative impact and community vulnerability criteria for use in permitting decisions consistent with Senate Bill 673’s Permit Protections for Vulnerable Communities project.

GOAL 3: HIGH-PERFORMING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

DTSC has established a culture of data-driven management to bring about continuous improvement in our programs and services. This is the goal on which we’ve made the most progress because our improved processes and tools continue to enable staff to meet ambitious program objectives. This continues to drive progress in contamination cleanup, hazardous waste management, and safer consumer products.

Our Site Mitigation and Restoration Program has surpassed cleanup of 4,000 properties in communities surrounding the former Exide battery recycling facility. We have also cleared 1,044 acres for reuse, contributing to millions of dollars in economic activity, from home construction to new jobs.

DTSC’s Permitting Division completed 30 percent of permit decisions due in FY21-22 within two years. While this is the highest rate achieved to date, our commitment to continuous improvement will drive higher numbers over time. A key result of such improvements made thus far is that DTSC permits are now stronger, more effective, and more enforceable than ever.

DTSC has also improved enforcement objectives by reducing the length of time it takes to complete inspection reports and to refer criminal cases to local or state attorneys’ offices for processing.

Objective A: We will accelerate decision-making by implementing streamlined processes for regulation development, permitting decisions, criminal investigations, site cleanups, and prioritization of products for which safer alternatives should be sought.

Completed Actions

13. For the Site Mitigation and Restoration Program, create a scalable set of project management processes and visual tools for tracking and communicating progress across key audiences: project team, program management, external stakeholders, and executive review.
14. Revise DTSC’s rulemaking process to ensure consistency of format and content, clarify roles and responsibilities, and establish clear internal review requirements.

15. Implement improvements in Safer Consumer Products project processes and tools to improve efficiency, minimize delay, enhance communication, and incorporate ongoing process improvements.
16. Leverage Green Ribbon Science Panel expertise to review Safer Consumer Products prioritization progress and program maturation since adoption of the framework regulations.
17. Improve referral time of Office of Criminal Investigation civil and misdemeanor cases to the Attorney General, district attorney, or city attorney's office to within 180 days from the date a violation was determined.
18. Improve referral time of Office of Criminal Investigation felony cases to the Attorney General, district attorney, or city attorney's office to within 365 days from the date a violation was determined.
19. Implement a streamlined cost estimate review process to ensure all legally required financial assurance mechanisms are in place.
20. Audit financial assurance requirements data to ensure all facilities and sites have up-to-date required financial assurance instruments, and ensure this information is included in EnviroStor.
21. Implement three of the permitting process improvements identified in the 2015 Permitting Improvement Workplan.
22. Implement Violations Scoring Procedures to evaluate violations and assess compliance history for permitted hazardous waste facilities. (Ongoing)

Objective B: We will improve processes and tools to enable staff to meet program objectives.

Completed Actions

23. Update policies and procedures to ensure quality, reliability, and accountability when procuring consultant, architectural, and engineering services, managing contracts, and accepting data and reports submitted to DTSC by vendors.
24. Identify technology to support administrative processes (e.g., online forms, electronic approvals and submissions, and improved intranet, facilities, and hotel tracking).

Objective C: We will streamline workload and data tracking to improve resource management and project planning.

Completed Actions

25. Develop a vacancy and Request for Personnel Action tracking for hiring managers to better understand hiring patterns.
26. Evaluate and streamline a system for tracking activities and labor hours used to recover costs from responsible parties.

Objective D: We will use a systematic governance process to prioritize DTSC's programs and services and ensure alignment with strategic priorities and available resources.

Completed Actions

27. Use baselines established through workload studies to align resources with strategic priorities.
28. Create business process improvement plans for each core program, with clear performance measures to ensure accountability. These plans will be established each fiscal year.

29. Conduct monthly governance meetings to track progress toward strategic objectives and actions; adjust plans and resources in response to emerging priorities and changing conditions. (Ongoing)
30. Develop a comprehensive workforce management plan that improves our ability to deliver our Mission, reduces our carbon footprint, provides employees with the appropriate tools to deliver their responsibilities, and considers appropriate change management strategies.

Objective E: We will use the best available scientific methods, engage experts across scientific disciplines, and provide clear and accessible scientific information in our risk communication, technical reports, and data presentations.

Completed Actions

31. Expand the number of chemicals and matrices that the Environmental Chemistry Laboratory tests, including building in-house database libraries of chemicals to screen samples.
32. Develop training modules for DTSC staff on laboratory techniques and quality control and quality assurance requirements.
33. Apply for extramural grants to increase research capacity.
34. Expand the number of chemicals and matrices that the Environmental Chemistry Laboratory tests, including the development of processes and procedures for identification and reporting of unknown or tentatively identified compounds.

Objective F: We will streamline DTSC's voluntary cleanup process to efficiently support the return of brownfields to productive use in a timely manner, while maintaining rigorous decision-making that protects communities and the environment.

Completed Actions

35. Improve the process for reviewing and approving investigation and cleanup decision-making documents associated with brownfields. (Ongoing)
36. Encourage and support brownfield renewal through the disbursement of loans and grants to address environmental conditions that may deter such renewal. (Ongoing)

Objective G: We will streamline enforcement to improve DTSC's ability to hold violators of Hazardous Waste Control Laws accountable.

Completed Actions

37. Implement streamlined penalty assessment and approval processes for administrative enforcement cases.
38. Reduce the number of days to complete inspection reports for hazardous waste generators and transporters, and treatment, storage, and disposal facilities.
39. Reduce the number of days required to complete administrative enforcement actions and refer cases to the Attorney General's Office. (Ongoing)

Objective A: We will recruit, develop, and retain a highly diverse and effective workforce committed to professional excellence and delivering on DTSC's Mission.

 **GOAL 4 :
ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH**

Every person who works for DTSC plays a vital role in advancing the department's Mission in service to California's environment and communities, and we are in the midst of a hiring boom that is transforming the makeup of our workforce. Thanks to the increased funding and workload resulting from the passage of the DTSC Governance and Fiscal Reforms of 2021 (SB 158), we developed and implemented a strategy to greatly expand, diversify, and strengthen DTSC's workforce while assuring our team is representative of the communities we serve. As a result, we have hired 354 employees since the summer of 2021, an average of 30 per month.

Our workforce is both more diverse and more engaged. 25 percent of our new employees live in communities impacted by environmental injustice, a significant percentage of them having learned of DTSC job openings through non-traditional, diverse, equitable, and inclusive recruiting sources. We have also shattered our employee engagement targets, increasing overall satisfaction by 8 percent since 2020, through improved internal communication channels that encourage staff to share their innovative ideas and perspectives and provide feedback on management effectiveness. Satisfaction with leading and managing change increased 20 percent during the same period.

Completed Action

40. Create and execute a comprehensive plan to invest increased funding to expand, diversify, and strengthen our workforce. Ramp up, provide training, and improve our recruiting, hiring, and onboarding to have a workforce with the capacity, diversity, and strengths to achieve our strategic goals. Systematically incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion, and geographically target hiring so our workforce is reflective of and connected to the communities we serve. (Ongoing)

Objective B: We will improve internal communication channels to enhance employee engagement with consistent, timely information. We will facilitate methods for DTSC staff to communicate their innovative ideas and perspectives about program improvements, and to provide feedback on management effectiveness.

Completed Actions

41. Ensure all supervisors and managers have the tools to successfully manage personnel and achieve performance goals, particularly in relation to managing in a hybrid/remote workforce environment.
42. Develop an advisory panel with representatives from key program areas to inform the content of DTSC News and the DTSC intranet homepage to proactively communicate enterprise information, opportunities for training, important dates, and other milestones.
43. Conduct an annual assessment of internal communication needs and the effectiveness of communication channels.
44. Develop innovative ways for the Director and the Executive Team to engage all staff, provide a consistent presence in regional offices, and communicate enterprise campaigns and initiatives.

45. Develop a method for receiving and responding to feedback from staff about programmatic and work environment improvements.
46. Develop a method for staff to provide meaningful and constructive feedback to supervisors and managers.

Objective C: We will ensure employee field, laboratory, and office safety and promote employee health, safety, and well-being by implementing best practices to minimize employee illnesses and injuries. We will support employee health and well-being with improved policies and procedures to support worker safety.

Completed Actions

47. Enhance the Employee Wellness Program.
48. Expand the monitoring capability to test for unknown air contaminants to improve the health and safety of DTSC field staff.
49. Develop fact sheets and additional communications about distracted driving and situational awareness and make them available to all staff.
50. Develop and implement enhanced safety training on an ongoing basis to ensure a highly competent field workforce and a safe work environment.

Objective D: We will build a professional, inclusive workplace where staff feel heard, supported, and valued. Enhance staff's understanding of what it means to be inclusive in their delivery of programs and services to diverse communities.

Completed Actions

51. Enhance DTSC's Leadership Academy curriculum to increase skills in building and supporting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace
52. Conduct an employee survey that focuses on opportunities to improve DTSC performance in inclusion, communication, accountability, learning, and conflict resolution.
53. Provide Windmills training that emphasizes examining personal attitudes and biases toward people with disabilities.
54. Implement the Diversity and Inclusion Work Group's prioritized recommendations through the work of the Diversity and Inclusion Council. (Ongoing)
55. Implement training in conflict resolution skills, other emotional intelligence dimensions, and effective communication. (Ongoing)

Objective A: We will implement a strategic budget planning process that prioritizes resource allocation.

 **GOAL 5 :**
FISCAL STEWARDSHIP

Prior to passage of SB 158, DTSC had a structural deficit so severe that the department was forced to rely on General Fund revenue for two fiscal years. Without passage of the bill's governance and fiscal reform, DTSC would not have been able to fulfill the promises made in this Strategic Plan. In order for it to pass, we had to demonstrate that we were spending our resources wisely and improving delivery of programs and services. We solicited a third party audit of our fiscal services, committed to improvement, and strengthened our fiscal tools. We shared that information publicly through a workload analysis document and held a series of stakeholder briefings on our findings. That transparency led to hard-earned credibility, which led to productive and meaningful conversations around the future of DTSC.

Signed by the Governor in July 2021 as part of the 2021 Budget Act, SB 158 made several substantial changes to the fees that support DTSC's core programs. First, it increased the Environmental Fee that is the primary revenue source for the Toxic Substances Control Account, which supports the Site Mitigation and Restoration Program and the Safer Consumer Products Program. Second, it streamlined the fee structure in the Hazardous Waste Management Program, ensuring the "polluter pays" principle and its equitable distribution of fees across a broad spectrum of fee payers, and ensuring adequate funding to support Hazardous Waste Management Program (HWMP) services and activities. Third, SB 158 increased facility fees, which will be deposited into a newly created Hazardous Waste Facilities Account to be used to fund our oversight of permitted facilities. Finally, SB 158 included provisions that allow fee levels to be adjusted annually to meet the appropriation levels established in the annual budget.

Fee reform will provide multiple benefits to the department and Californians. The increased revenue will provide resources that allow the department to better meet its mission to protect Californians and the environment. The 2022-23 state budget uses the additional funding to support a range of departmental efforts, including CVCI, Safer Consumer Products, HWMP investigations and enforcement, development of the Hazardous Waste Management Plan, and the newly established Board of Environmental Safety. In so doing, fee reform will increase the department's ability to investigate and remediate contaminated sites, enforce hazardous waste management laws and regulations, and direct the use of safer chemicals and manufacturing processes for consumer products. In addition, not only will fee reform result in additional revenue, but the provisions that allow for annual adjustments to fee levels will ensure more sustainable and reliable funding for the department.

DTSC has overhauled its fiscal management system, leading to a holistic perspective on financial workflows, including budgets, contracts, business services, procurement, and accounting. We have launched an expenditure forecasting model that is tailored to the needs of individual programs within

the department. Pivotal to the passage of the 2021 reform measures, DTSC finalized its core program workload analyses to provide transparency on how DTSC is using its resources.

In an effort to improve our financial management, ensuring we are prudent stewards of budgeted resources, we have trained staff in project management and completed numerous Lean Six Sigma process improvement projects. The results of these efforts are paying off in our preparedness to effectively implement the mandates of the fee reform. We have successfully implemented a Cost Recovery Management System – an electronic case management system that will hold responsible parties accountable and support cost recovery efforts.

Completed Actions

56. Develop processes and procedures to centralize the tracking of each program’s budget to ensure accuracy and eliminate redundant work. Provide fiscal information to enable executives to effectively identify resource needs and manage, monitor, and control program resources. Assist programs with developing strategies for reallocating resources to address unanticipated demands. (Ongoing)
57. Analyze and create process improvement plans for contract and procurement that support fiscal management to increase stewardship of public funds.
58. Analyze and create process improvement plans for accounting that support fiscal management to increase stewardship of public funds.
59. Analyze and create process improvement plans for travel requests and reimbursement that support fiscal management to increase stewardship of public funds.
60. Create an end-to-end view of the workflows of Budgets, Contracts, Business Services, Procurement, and Accounting to coordinate our processes, encumbrances, and expenditures across these units.

Objective B: We will work with stakeholders to develop a financial model that ensures DTSC programs and services are funded to support core activities and strategic initiatives, and that is flexible enough to provide for future changes in statutory requirements.

Completed Actions

61. Finalize core program workload analysis to provide transparency on how DTSC is using its resources.
62. Conduct a fiscal analysis that aligns information gained from the workload analysis with the laws and regulations governing DTSC programs. Identify gaps between resources, statutory mandates, and strategic priorities.
63. Fees Unit will meet quarterly with the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration, DTSC Accounts Receivable, and DTSC Programs to discuss reported revenues and forecasting methodologies. (Ongoing).

Objective C: We will improve our financial management tools to ensure prudent stewardship of budgeted resources to meet operational needs.

Completed Actions

64. Complete Phase 2 to upgrade the Cost Recovery Management System to recoup DTSC's costs for site cleanup and permitting work to hold responsible parties accountable.
65. Develop an expenditure forecasting model that is tailored to the need of each program, rather than a one-size-fits-all model.
66. Improve program-level monthly budget plans and forecasts to ensure that programs have fiscal information that is accurate, sufficiently detailed to allow effective budget management, provided in a timely fashion, and easily understandable.
67. Achieve a full completion upgrade of the Cost Recovery Management System to provide enhanced case management for the Cost Recovery Program.



California Department of Toxic Substances Control