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## Recommendations

**Recommendation 1. The General Assembly should direct DEQ to study the narrow spans of five organizational units identified as potentially problematic and report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agricultural and Economic Resources regarding justification for narrow spans.**

As discussed in Finding 2, five DEQ units contain high levels of narrow spans of control, defined as a supervisor overseeing three or fewer subordinates. For the five units—Public Affairs, Mitigation Services, Human Resources, Chief Financial Office, and Marine Fisheries, DEQ should be directed to report on the following items:

1. For all narrow spans, provide detailed justification of all positions involved including job activities, roles, and responsibilities for each employee in the narrow span including the supervisor and subordinates.
2. Identify any narrow spans that could be combined or collapsed into other spans.
3. Identify any spans that could be combined if DEQ offered a technical expertise compensation track to reward high levels of institutional knowledge and retain employees without making them supervisors.

DEQ should provide a detailed report on the above-listed items to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agricultural and Economic Resources by May 1, 2020.

**Recommendations 2. The General Assembly should direct DEQ to develop and report on 1) a formal business plan for the Permitting Transformation Project including return on investment and 2) a performance management plan for permit processes and the accompanying data management system to oversee it.**

The formalized business plan and return on investment analysis for the Permitting Transformation Project should include the following:

- data-driven analyses of costs and anticipated benefits of the current approach as well as an implementation timeline;
- comparison of the current approach to an off-the-shelf and/or customized system from a private vendor; and
- summary comparison of the current approach to other states' approaches.

The performance management system for the Permitting Transformation Project should include, but not be limited, to the following:

- the method for establishing permit processing performance measures and benchmarks and
- a plan for collecting permit processing data over time to longitudinally assess performance.

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DEQ should consider working in consultation with relevant management staff at the Office of State Budget and Management to develop the components of the abovementioned plan. DEQ should report on these efforts to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agricultural and Economic Resources by May 1, 2020.

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## Appendices

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Appendix A: Marine Fisheries Organizational Chart

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## Agency Response

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A draft of this report was submitted to the Department of Environmental Quality for review. Its response is provided following the appendix.

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## Program Evaluation Division Contact and Acknowledgments

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For more information on this report, please contact the lead evaluator, Emily B. McCarthy, at [emily.mccartha@ncleg.net](mailto:emily.mccartha@ncleg.net).

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