GO-TIME: DEP Increases Oil and Gas Drilling Inspections after Switch to Electronic Process in 2017

Harrisburg, PA – The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced that it will complete more oil and gas drilling site inspections in 2017 than in 2016, as a result of a GO-TIME project that replaced years of paper forms with a mobile app.

"Making the inspection process completely electronic has transformed the way our inspectors do their job, increasing productivity, customer service, and transparency," said DEP Deputy Secretary Scott Perry.

"This project is a great example of how agencies can work together on common challenges," said Sharon Ward, director of the Governor's Office of Transformation, Innovation, Management and Efficiency (GO-TIME). "We are leveraging the award-winning mobile technology cultivated at PennDOT so that other agencies can modernize how they perform their own field inspections."

DEP oil and gas compliance inspections have increased more than 300 percent in the past decade, from 10,566 in 2007 to almost 35,000 in 2016. All inspections were done with paper forms in the field, followed by data entry in the office.

"We wanted to switch to all electronic inspections for a while. It wasn't until the GO-TIME initiative that everything came together," said Perry.

The DEP Office of Oil and Gas Management and Bureau of Information Technology teamed up with PennDOT in 2016 to build off existing technology at PennDOT to create a mobile app with preloaded operator and well information; photo and voice recognition capability; and a connection to EFACTS, the DEP inspection and compliance management database.

Duplicate entry has been virtually eliminated, and trips between field sites and offices are significantly reduced.

The first phase of the app--for surface activities—launched in February 2017, and by November, surface inspectors were using it to conduct more than 99% of their inspections. In early fall, functionality for subsurface activities was added. Considerable gains have been achieved:

- DEP is on pace to complete at least 2,000 more surface inspections in 2017 than in 2016, for an 11.5% increase.
- Inspectors' productivity has increased an average of 16 percent since April and 29 percent in the fourth quarter of 2017.
- DEP will achieve over $500,000 in productivity savings -- roughly equivalent to adding six additional inspectors.
- Because the app records results in real time, inspectors can provide outcomes to well operators sooner, in some cases the same-day.
- More inspection data are available to the public on the DEP web site, and more quickly, because the app enables inspectors to collect more robust data and the inspection reports are posted immediately.

GO-TIME is working to modernize government operations to reduce costs and improve services. GO-TIME works with agencies to identify opportunities to share resources, collaborate and engage employees in transformation. These efforts have saved taxpayers over $373 million since 2015 through projects aimed at reducing costs, increasing productivity and improving services to the public.

To learn more about GO-TIME, visit www.governor.pa.gov/go-time/.

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