

Arkansas Governor Hutchinson Announces Consolidation of Cabinet-Level Agencies: Creation of Department of Energy and Environment



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Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson issued a news release and announced in an October 3rd press briefing the proposed consolidation of Cabinet-level agencies from 42 to 15.

The Governor described this action as the “first comprehensive effort to trim state government since 1972.”

Several Arkansas Environmental/Energy/Natural Resource agencies would be consolidated into a “Department of Energy and Environment” (“Department”). The Department would encompass:

- Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (“ADEQ”)
- Arkansas Public Service Commission
- Arkansas Pollution, Control, and Ecology Commission
- Arkansas Oil and Gas Commission and Board
- Arkansas Geological Survey

The following bodies are listed as subunits under ADEQ in the Department, which include:

- Committee on Petroleum Storage Tanks
- Nutrient Water Quality Trading Advisory Panel
- Arkansas Marketing Board for Recyclables

The Forestry Commission and Arkansas Natural Resources Commission would be consolidated with the Agriculture Board, State Plant Board, and Livestock & Poultry Commission into a “Department of Agriculture.”

The effects of the proposed consolidation are stated to include:

- Improve the delivery of services to Arkansas taxpayers by breaking down silos within state government
- Improve management control throughout state government through the creation of the Department of Transformation and Shared Services
- Allow agencies to maintain their independent services, where appropriate

- Create savings for the state and taxpayers beginning in the FY 2021 budget through lease and rent savings, shared services, and a more responsive management approach

A copy of the news release with links to the proposed reorganization chart and guide can be found [here](#).