

# Strategic Lean Project Report

**For Reporting Period:** July 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015

## I. General Information:

Lead agency name: Department of Ecology

Partner agencies: None

**Improvement project title:** Electronic Return Receipt for Certified Mail

**Date improvement project was initiated:** 1/1/2015

**Project type:** New Project

**Project is directly connected to:**

Results Washington performance measure

Agency Strategic Plan

Other

**If applicable, specify the alignment:**

N/A

N/A

Goal 5: Efficient, effective & accountable government,  
Goal Topic: Resource Stewardship (My money is used responsibly.)

**Report reviewed and approved by:** Polly Zehm

## II. Project Summary:

The Department of Ecology's headquarters and Southwest Regional Office improved the process they use to send certified mail, resulting in an average savings of \$2.84 per piece of certified mail for postage, supplies, and labor, and five minutes less staff time spent per piece. This is an expansion of a project that started in Ecology's Northwest Regional Office that we submitted for the January – December 2015 reporting period. Our Northwest office continues to use this new process, and saved an additional \$1,243.92 from July to December 2015.

## III. Project Details:

**Identify the problem:** The process for sending letters using certified mail is cumbersome and expensive.

**Problem statement:** Ecology is spending too much money and time on certified letters.

**Improvement description:** In 2014, Ecology's Northwest Regional Office Water Resources staff implemented a new electronic process for sending certified mail. The new process reduced postage, supplies, and staff time. Ecology reported on those savings in July 2015, for the January to June 2015 Governor's report.

Since then, our Southwest office and headquarters have started using the new process, resulting in additional savings to Ecology, as detailed in the table below.

Our goal is to expand the use of the new electronic certified mail process to other

# Strategic Lean Project Report

programs and offices at Ecology. The Water Resources Program and our Customer Services Specialist who manages the Ecology Mail Center are encouraging other Ecology programs and offices to adopt this new process. We will continue to collect data on this improvement and provide an update for a future reports if applicable.

**Customer involvement:** We did not include any of our customers in the process improvement, but the customers we have talked to really like the new process because they don't have to write in a date anymore. They only have to print their name and sign.

## IV. Project Details:

Improved process as measured by: <i>(Click those that apply)</i>	Specific results achieved: <i>(Complete the narrative boxes below)</i>	Total Impact: <i>(Actuals; Current Reporting Period)</i>	Results status:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Cost</b>	Decreased cost of Certified Mail <b>from</b> an average \$8.66 per letter (postage, supplies, labor) <b>to</b> average \$5.82 per letter at SWRO.	Total savings for HQ and SWRO for 592 letters = \$1,681.28	Preliminary
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Time</b>	Decreased time to process Certified Mail <b>from</b> 6:30 minutes per letter <b>to</b> 1:30 minutes (the cost savings associated with this is accounted for in the "cost" part of this table).	49.33 hours for 592 letters	Preliminary

## V. Contact information:

**Name:** Hannah Waterstrat  
**Phone number:** (360) 407-7668

**e-mail:** [Hannah.waterstrat@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Hannah.waterstrat@ecy.wa.gov)

# Strategic Lean Project Report

**For Reporting Period:** July 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015

## I. General Information:

Lead agency name: Department of Ecology

Partner agencies: List other agencies involved in the project

**Improvement project title:** Electronic Permitting for Hanford Cleanup

**Date improvement project was initiated:** 2012

**Project type:** New Project

**Project is directly connected to:**

- Results Washington performance measure
- Agency Strategic Plan
- Other

**If applicable, specify the alignment:**

3.1.b. Increase completion percentage of the Hanford tank waste treatment plant from 63% to 86% by 2016.  
Prevent and Reduce Toxic Threats

**Report reviewed and approved by:** Polly Zehm

## II. Project Summary:

The Department of Ecology improved the process for developing and distributing copies of the Hanford hazardous waste permit, resulting in reduced staff time, fewer supplies, and improved delivery method.

## III. Project Details:

**Identify the problem:** The Hanford Facility Dangerous Waste Permit (Site-wide Permit) is a very large and complex document that has been distributed in hard copy format to Hanford and the public making it difficult for Hanford employees, Ecology employees, and the public to access. Each time part of the permit is revised, the multiple pages and copies must be managed within the larger document.

**Problem statement:** For each 16,476-page copy of the permit, Ecology used 16 reams of paper; 40 divider tabs; 19 five-inch binders; and 600 sleeves for drawings. Initially there were 22 copies of the permit, which totaled 362 reams of paper (362,472 pages)

**Improvement description:** The Permit Production Team in the Nuclear Waste Program researched the feasibility of reducing the number of hard copies needed to meet legal requirements. They determined only three hard copies needed to be produced, and the rest could be distributed on DVD.

**Customer involvement:** We first consulted the Attorney General's Office to fully understand legal requirements regarding hard copies of the permit. Then we asked the U.S. Department of Energy (permittee) if they wanted to continue to receive a hard copy or if an electronic version would meet their needs.

# Strategic Lean Project Report

## IV. Project Details:

Improved process as measured by: <i>(Click those that apply)</i>	Specific results achieved: <i>(Complete the narrative boxes below)</i>	Total Impact: <i>(Actuals; Current Reporting Period)</i>	Results status:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Cost</b>	Decreased staff costs <b>from an average*</b> of \$38,935.00 for 22 hard copies <b>to an average</b> of \$5,309.00 for 3 hard copies in August 2015 with the Revision 8c Permit.	Average savings of \$33,626.83	Preliminary
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Cost</b>	Decreased supply costs <b>from an average*</b> of \$40,243.89 for 22 hard copies <b>to an average</b> of \$5,487.00 for 3 hard copies in August 2015 with the Revision 8c Permit.  These savings occur a minimum of 4 times per year.	An average savings of \$34,756.89	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Quality</b>	By implementing a standard production methodology, which includes a quality assurance phase, the overall quality of the permit was improved.	N/A	Select from dropdown.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Customer Satisfaction</b>	Stakeholder satisfaction has improved, now that the permit is available in electronic form on the Ecology website.		

**\*This data is based on data gathered in 2012 when we first implemented electronic vs. hard copies of permit revisions.**

## V. Contact information:

**Name:** Angel Almaraz

**e-mail:** [angel.almaraz@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:angel.almaraz@ecy.wa.gov)

**Phone number:** 509-372-7958

## VI. Optional Visuals:

This is an after picture of the three complete sets of the permit. Imagine what 22 complete sets of the permit looked like before the improvement.

