

# WORKPLACE CULTURE SURVEY

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

PERFORMANCE AUDIT SERVICES

**Informational Report**  
**February 28, 2025**

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February 28, 2025

The Honorable J. Cameron Henry, Jr.  
President of the Senate  
The Honorable Phillip R. DeVillier,  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Dear Senator Henry and Representative DeVillier:

This informational report provides the results of our workplace culture survey of employees of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ). This report is intended to provide timely information related to an area of interest to the legislature or based on a legislative request. I hope this report will benefit you in your legislative decision-making process.

We would like to express our appreciation to LDEQ for its assistance during this review.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael J. "Mike" Waguespack, CPA  
Legislative Auditor

MJW/aa

LDEQSURVEY





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# Louisiana Legislative Auditor

Michael J. "Mike" Waguespack, CPA



## Workplace Culture Survey Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality

February 2025

Audit Control # 40240013

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### Introduction

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**Disclaimer:** *This Workplace Culture Survey (survey) is based on responses collected from employees of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ). The survey was conducted by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor’s Performance Audit Services in response to a legislative request. The survey was designed to collect employee perspectives and should be understood as a reflection of their self-reported experiences and opinions. It is important to note that this was **not** a performance audit and does **not** constitute an evaluation of LDEQ’s operational efficiency, effectiveness, or compliance with applicable laws and regulations.*

*The survey was voluntary, with responses received from approximately half of the LDEQ workforce. As with any survey, results are based on participants’ perceptions at the time of response and may not represent the views of all employees. The results presented from the survey are intended to provide insight into employee experiences and opinions. These results should be considered within the context of a survey’s inherent limitations and used as one source of information to inform discussions or further exploration.*

This report provides the results of our workplace culture survey of employees of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ). We conducted this survey in response to a legislative request to review the culture and concerns within LDEQ. The legislative request referenced concerns about issues within the agency’s work environment and their potential impact on the agency’s ability to effectively carry out its essential functions.

Workplace culture includes the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions held by employees within an organization and is shaped by an organization’s mission, vision, policies, work procedures, and rules. According to research, a positive workplace culture is one that values collaboration, maintains effective communication, encourages creativity and innovation, fosters ongoing learning, enhances problem-solving abilities, and provides recognition and rewards for excellent work; empowering employees to reach their fullest potential while regularly feeling satisfied with their work. A negative workplace culture can hinder employees’ job satisfaction and

*"LDEQ will take every reasonable step to create a safe, secure, respectful work environment that is free of violence, aggressive acts, verbal and non-verbal threatening, harassing, and discriminatory behavior toward or by its employees or the public that they serve."*

**Source:** LDEQ "Preventing Workplace Violence, Harassment, and Discrimination" Policy

reduces productivity. Leaders of organizations have a strong influence on workplace culture.

State law<sup>1</sup> establishes LDEQ as the primary state agency concerned with environmental protection and gives LDEQ jurisdiction over the regulation of air quality, water pollution control, the regulation of solid waste disposal, the protection and preservation of the scenic rivers and streams of the state, the regulation and control of radiation, and the management of hazardous waste, as well as the regulation of programs that encourage, assist, and result in the reduction of wastes generated within Louisiana. According to state law,<sup>2</sup> the maintenance of a healthful and safe environment is a matter of critical state concern.

LDEQ's mission is to provide service to the people of Louisiana through comprehensive environmental protection in order to promote and protect health, safety, and welfare. To accomplish its mission and legal mandates, LDEQ employs 714 staff<sup>3</sup> comprised of a range of professional and technical experts including engineers, environmental scientists, and geologists, as well as support staff such as administrative staff, human resources, and legal staff. In January 2024, the Governor appointed a new Secretary to head LDEQ.

In addition to state requirements, LDEQ enforces federal mandates from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). EPA delegates authority of some environmental programs to the states, meaning that the EPA assigns states the responsibility to operate programs that are mandated by federal statute. LDEQ is responsible for implementing these programs, and the EPA monitors to ensure LDEQ adequately enforces federal statutes. If not, Louisiana could lose its delegated authority, and the EPA would be responsible for enforcing federal requirements on industry in Louisiana. Therefore, LDEQ's workplace culture and its impact on employees' job performance is important to ensure that the department is able to successfully meet its mission.

To assess LDEQ employees' perception of workplace culture, identify barriers to job performance, and evaluate employee perspectives on leadership, we reviewed a variety of informational publications concerning workplace culture, met with a selection of LDEQ employees, and sent a survey to 712<sup>4</sup> LDEQ employees in July 2024.<sup>5</sup> We received 377 responses for an overall response rate of 52.9%.<sup>6</sup>

To evaluate industry perceptions, we met with four industry stakeholders and obtained feedback from an additional industry stakeholder regarding their working

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<sup>1</sup> Louisiana Revised Statute (La. R.S.) 30:2011

<sup>2</sup> La. R.S. 30:2002

<sup>3</sup> As of July 8, 2024

<sup>4</sup> As of July 2024, LDEQ had 714 employees; however, two employees had previously opted out of receiving surveys via SurveyMonkey, so they did not receive our survey.

<sup>5</sup> Our scope did not include assessing the validity of employee perceptions of unlawful practices or the impact of workplace culture on productivity.

<sup>6</sup> The number of responses for each question varies because not all respondents answered each question.

relationship with LDEQ, including any recent changes. Industry stakeholders we interviewed stated that LDEQ performance from their perspective was either as good as, or in some cases better, over the past six months (January through June 2024).

The objective of this report was:

**To provide the results of our workplace culture survey of employees at the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.**

Our results are summarized on the next page and discussed in detail throughout the remainder of the report. For each survey question we provide the survey results as well as the LDEQ employee participation rate. Appendix A contains LDEQ's response to this report, Appendix B contains our scope and methodology, and Appendix C contains citations to our sources.

**Informational reports are intended to provide more timely information than standards-based performance audits. While these informational reports do not follow *Governmental Auditing Standards*, we conduct quality assurance activities to ensure the information presented is accurate.**

## Objective: To provide the results of our workplace culture survey of employees at the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.

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This report contains results from the survey we sent to 712 LDEQ employees in July 2024. We received 377 responses, achieving an overall response rate of 52.9%. The number of responses varied by question, as indicated in each exhibit, because not all respondents answered each question. Specifically, we found the following:

- **206 (55.7%) of 370 survey respondents are satisfied with their job.** Suggestions for ways to improve job satisfaction included increase trust in employees, improve employee treatment related to respect and professionalism, and improve benefits related to pay and telework.
- **287 (78.2%) of 367 survey respondents indicated that morale at LDEQ has worsened over the past six months (January through June 2024).** When asked what they like most about their jobs, survey respondents mentioned their work, coworkers, and benefits such as flexible schedules and work-life balance.
- **156 (43.2%) of 361 survey respondents agree that LDEQ fosters and encourages an agency culture that promotes its mission of comprehensive environmental protection in order to promote and protect health, safety, and welfare.** In addition, 165 (45.7%) of 361 survey respondents disagree that they work in a toxic environment.
- **Survey results indicate that the barriers that affect respondents' ability to do their job, or do it as well as they would like, included inadequate staffing, technology, and training.**
- **292 (80.9%) of 361 respondents felt no pressure to do something against the law, LDEQ policy, or Civil Service rules in the past six months (January through June 2024).**
- **More than 75% of respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" that their managers, supervisors, and administrators model qualities such as integrity, respect, and empathy.** When survey respondents were asked what changes could be made to improve leadership at LDEQ, respondents' suggestions included leadership should improve the way they treat employees, obtain more knowledge about LDEQ's processes, and trust employees.

- **214 (59.3%) of 361 survey respondents indicated that they have “never” or “rarely” personally experienced or witnessed unprofessional behavior in the past six months (January through June 2024).**
- **268 (73.2%) of 366 respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that communication is effective within their division/office/group, and 54 (14.8%) of 366 “agree” or “strongly agree” that LDEQ executive leadership effectively communicates the purpose for changes and initiatives that occur within the agency.**

This information is discussed in more detail on the pages that follow.

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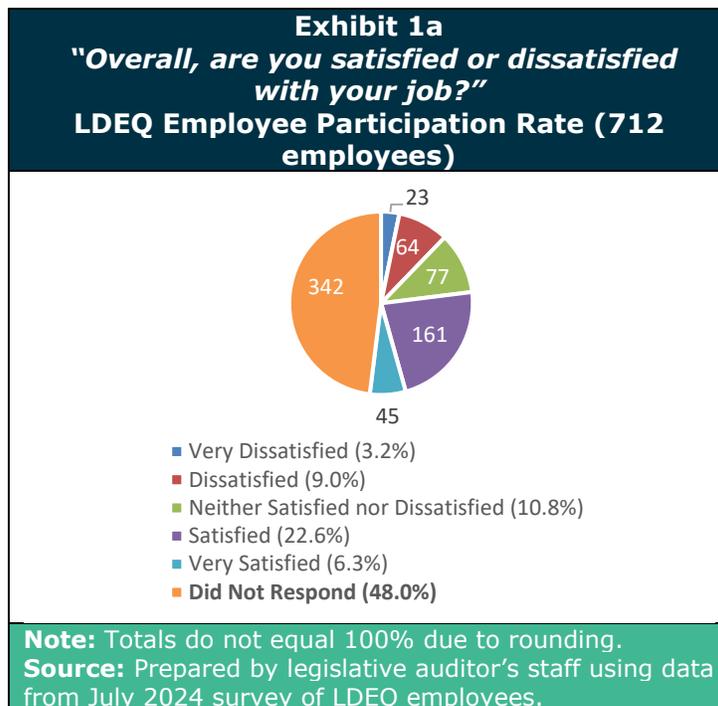
**206 (55.7%) of 370 survey respondents are satisfied with their job. Suggestions for ways to improve job satisfaction included increase trust in employees, improve employee treatment related to respect and professionalism, and improve benefits related to pay and telework.**

Job satisfaction is the extent to which employees are happy, or satisfied, with their jobs and work environment, and is a good predictor of employee retention. When employees are satisfied with their work environment, they are more likely to use their skills, abilities, and knowledge to be successful. A workplace environment that satisfies employees is crucial because staff can work more efficiently, leading to higher employee performance and organizational output. Further, when employees find their workplace to be suitable, it can lead to an improved overall well-being, which improves their commitment to work. Factors that can influence the satisfaction of employees include qualities of the work environment such as job complexity, stressful working conditions, interpersonal treatment at work, and pay level.

When asked about job satisfaction, 206 (55.7%) of 370 survey respondents indicated that they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their job, as shown in Exhibit 1.

<b>Exhibit 1</b> <b>"Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your job?"</b> <b>370 responses out of 712 employees</b> <b>(52.0% response rate)</b>	
Response	Percent
Very Satisfied	12.2%
Satisfied	43.5
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	20.8
Dissatisfied	17.3
Very Dissatisfied	6.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Source:</b> Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from July 2024 survey of LDEQ employees.	

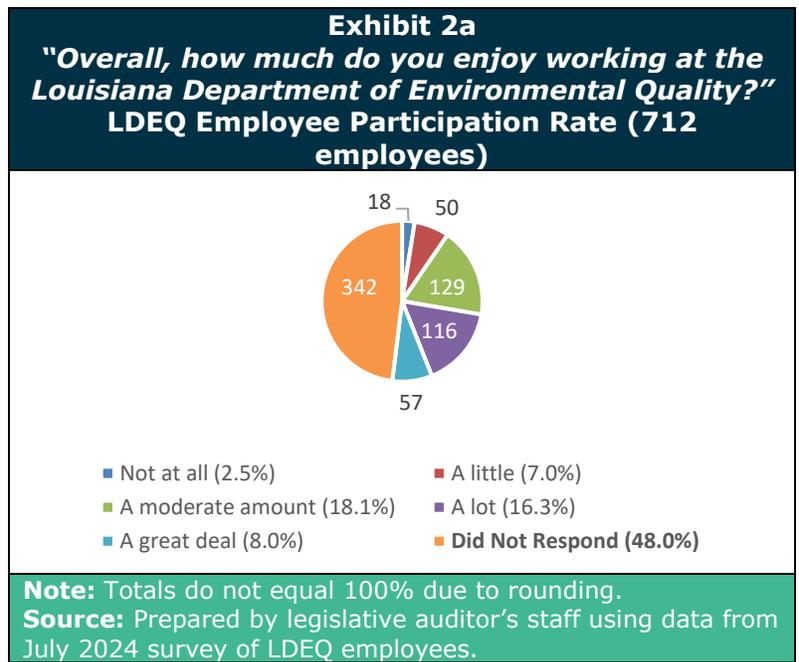
Again, not all LDEQ employees responded to our survey. For instance, 370 of 712 employees answered the question asked in Exhibit 1. Throughout this report, the number of employees who answered each question is included in each exhibit. Exhibit 1a depicts the participation rate for this question based on the number of employees who actually answered the survey.



When asked what could be done to improve employee job satisfaction, suggestions included increase trust in employees, improve employee treatment related to respect and professionalism, and improve benefits related to pay and telework. According to LDEQ executive leadership, it has recently implemented initiatives to improve employees' job satisfaction including "Employee of the Month," and "Secretary Social."

Exhibits 2, 3, and 4 contain the results of additional survey questions.

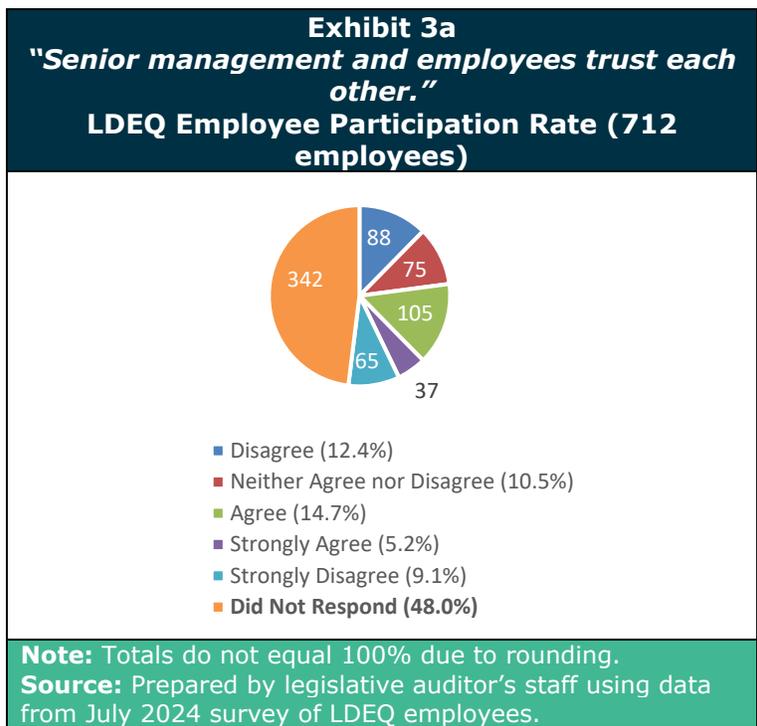
<b>Exhibit 2</b> <b>"Overall, how much do you enjoy working at the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality?"</b> <b>370 responses out of 712 employees (52.0% response rate)</b>	
Response	Percent
A great deal	15.4%
A lot	31.3
A moderate amount	34.9
A little	13.5
Not at all	4.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Source:</b> Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from July 2024 survey of LDEQ employees.	



**Exhibit 3**  
**"Senior management and employees trust each other."**  
**370 responses out of 712 employees**  
**(52.0% response rate)**

Response	Percent
Strongly Disagree	17.6%
Disagree	23.8
Neither Agree nor Disagree	20.2
Agree	28.4
Strongly Agree	10.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

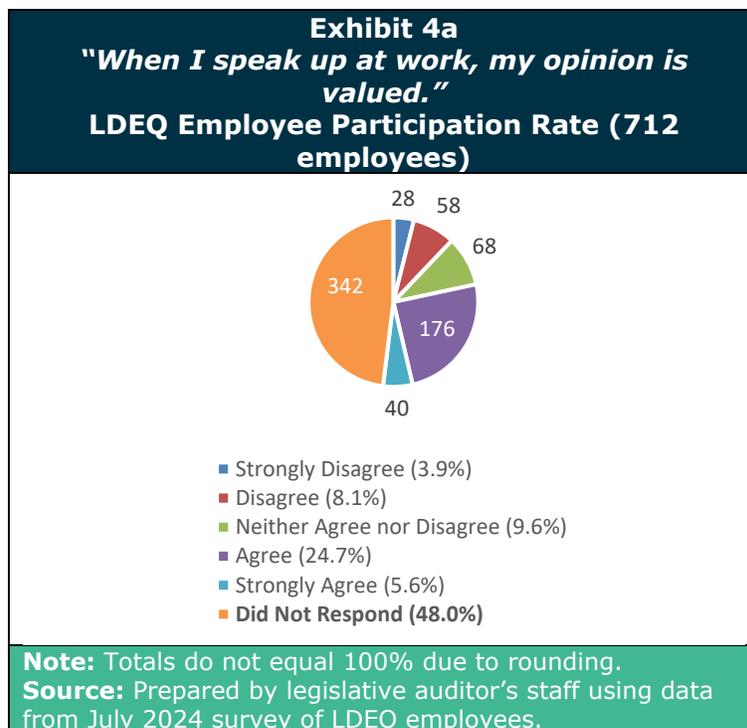
**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from July 2024 survey of LDEQ employees.



**Exhibit 4**  
**"When I speak up at work, my opinion is valued."**  
**370 responses out of 712 employees**  
**(52.0% response rate)**

Response	Percent
Strongly Disagree	7.6%
Disagree	15.7
Neither Agree nor Disagree	18.3
Agree	47.6
Strongly Agree	10.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from July 2024 survey of LDEQ employees.




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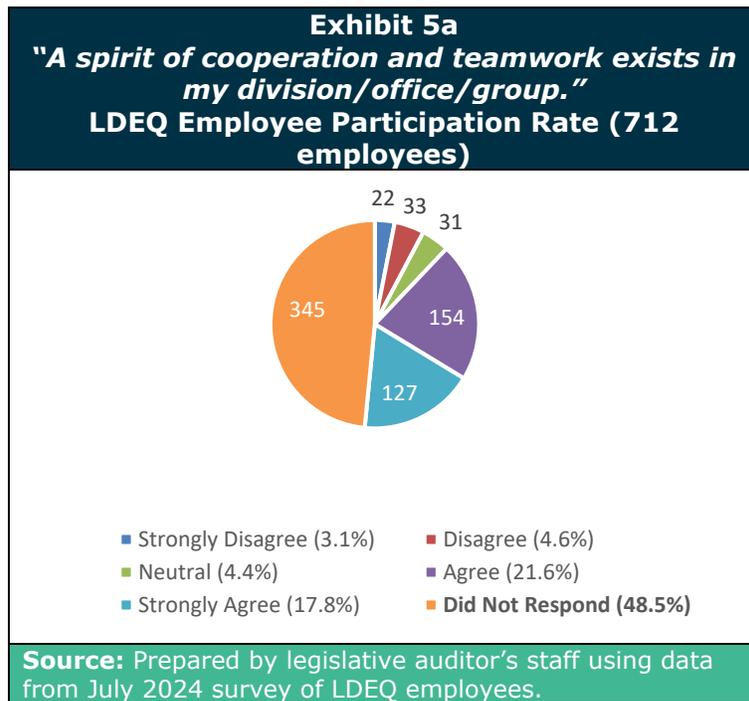
**287 (78.2%) of 367 survey respondents indicated that morale at LDEQ has worsened over the past six months (January through June 2024).**

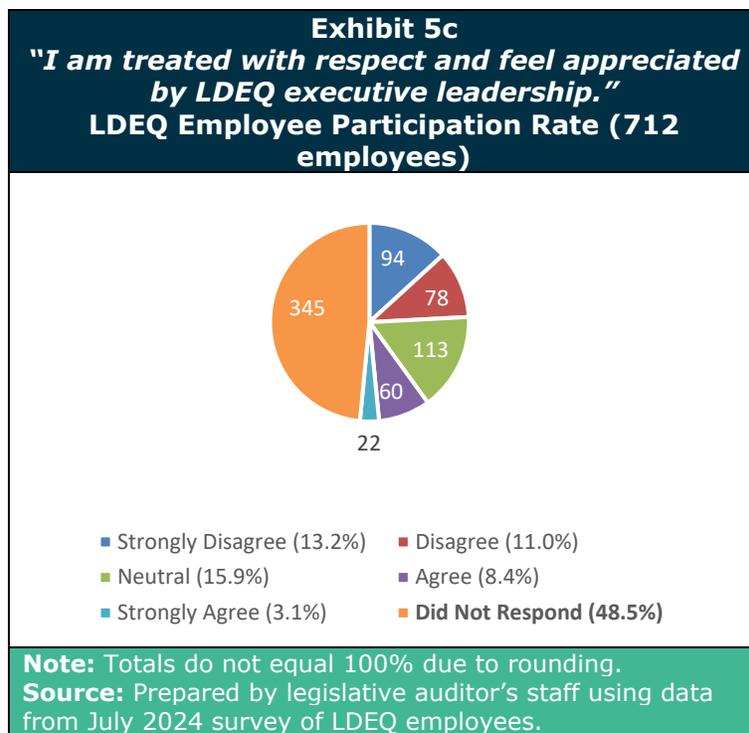
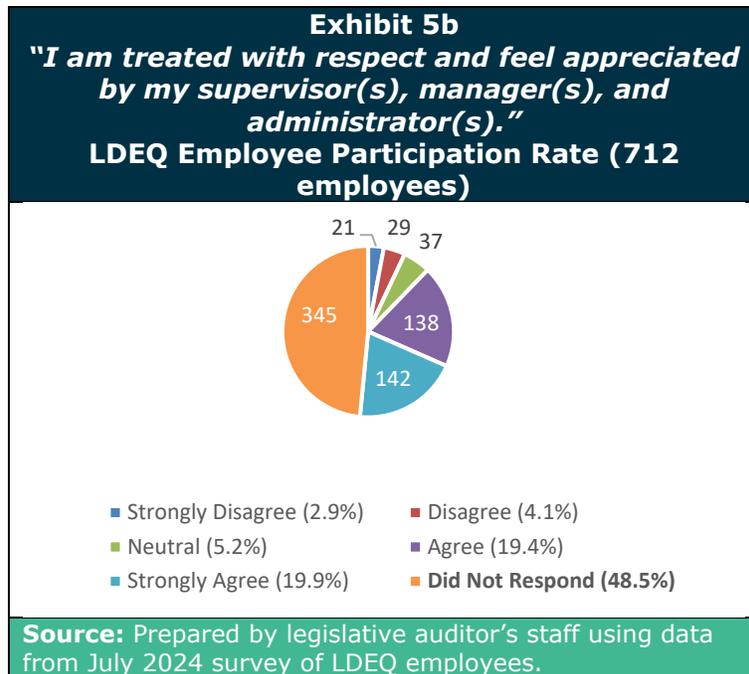
Morale includes an employee's attitude toward his or her job; how positive an employee feels towards an organization; or the level of fulfillment an employee has with aspects of the work environment such as variety, challenge, feedback, and opportunity. Morale is influenced by an employee's perception of workplace culture including the level of respect and professionalism they feel, and the leadership style of direct supervisors and leadership. When morale is low, turnover rates may increase, and employees may feel less motivated and more apathetic toward their jobs. Low morale may also impact an entity's ability to successfully and efficiently achieve its goals.

**When asked what they like most about their jobs, survey respondents mentioned their work, coworkers, and benefits such as flexible schedules and work-life balance.** For example, 281 (76.6%) of 367 respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" that a spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in their division/office/group, as shown in Exhibit 5.

<b>Exhibit 5</b> <b>Job Satisfaction Results</b> <b>367 responses out of 712 employees (51.5% response rate)</b>						
Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my division/office/group.	34.6%	42.0%	8.4%	9.0%	6.0%	<b>100%</b>
I am treated with respect and feel appreciated by my supervisor(s), manager(s), and administrator(s).	38.7	37.6	10.1	7.9	5.7	<b>100%</b>
I am treated with respect and feel appreciated by LDEQ executive leadership.	6.0%	16.3%	30.8%	21.3%	25.6%	<b>100%</b>

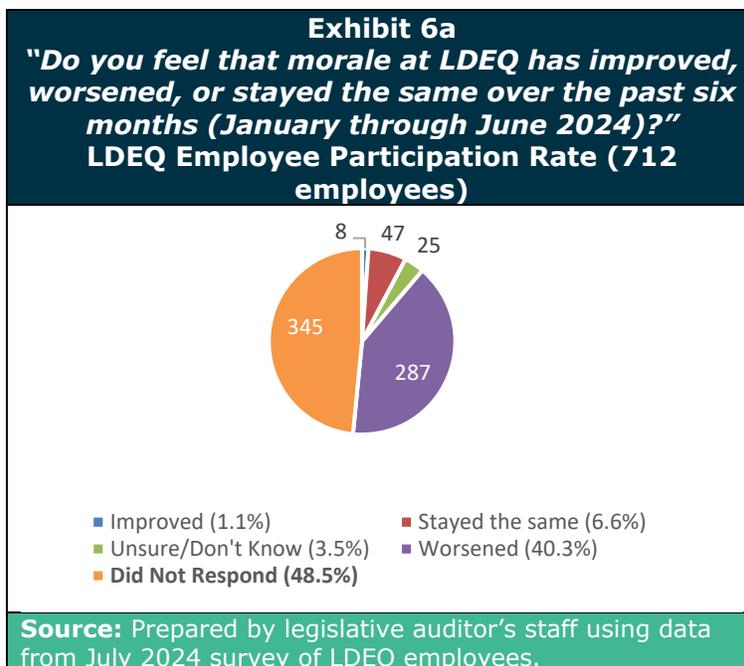
**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff using data from July 2024 survey of LDEQ employees.





**287 (78.2%) of 367 of survey respondents indicated that morale at LDEQ has worsened over the past six months (January through June 2024), as shown in Exhibit 6.**

<b>Exhibit 6</b> <b>LDEQ Morale Results</b> <b>367 responses out of 712 employees (51.5% response rate)</b>					
Question	Improved	Stayed the same	Unsure/Don't Know	Worsened	Total
Do you feel that morale at LDEQ has improved, worsened, or stayed the same over the past six months (January through June 2024)?	2.2%	12.8%	6.8%	78.2%	<b>100%</b>
<b>Source:</b> Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from July 2024 survey of LDEQ employees.					



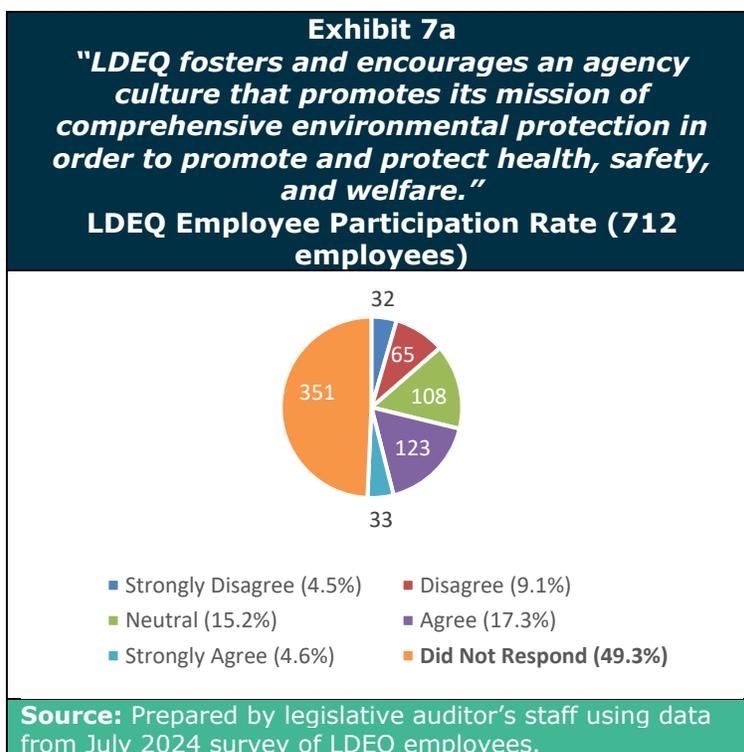
**156 (43.2%) of 361 survey respondents agree that LDEQ fosters and encourages an agency culture that promotes its mission of comprehensive environmental protection in order to promote and protect health, safety, and welfare.**

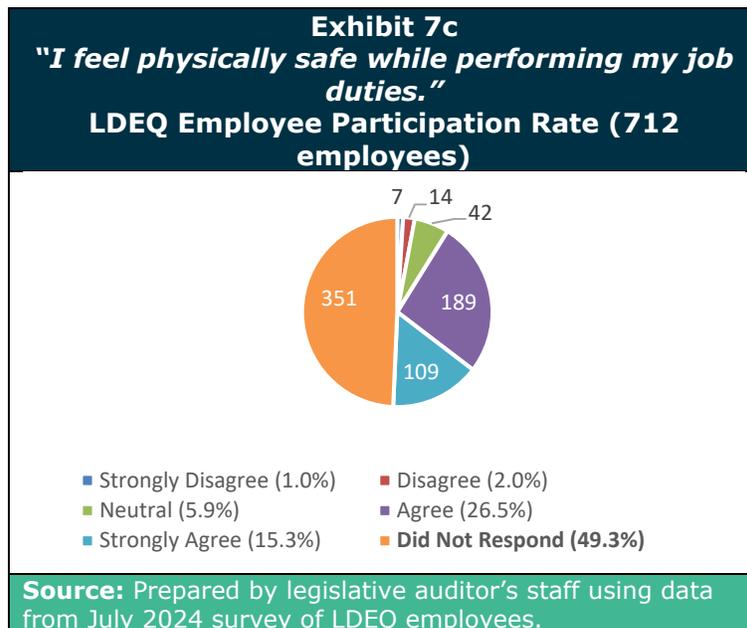
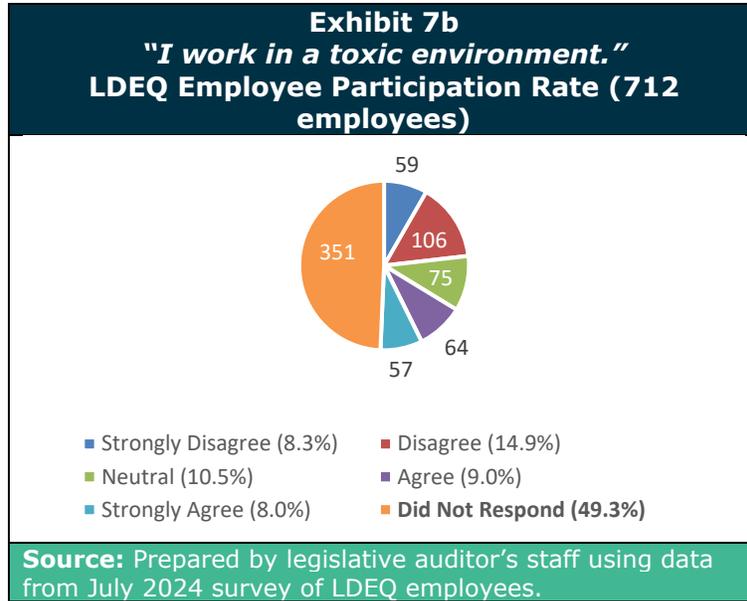
Workplace culture includes the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions held by employees within an organization. Workplace culture is shaped by an organization's mission, vision, policies, work procedures, and rules. A positive workplace culture is one that values collaboration, maintains effective communication, encourages creativity and innovation, fosters ongoing learning, enhances problem-solving abilities, and provides recognition, and rewards for excellent work. A negative workplace culture can serve as a barrier to employees' job satisfaction and reduce productivity.

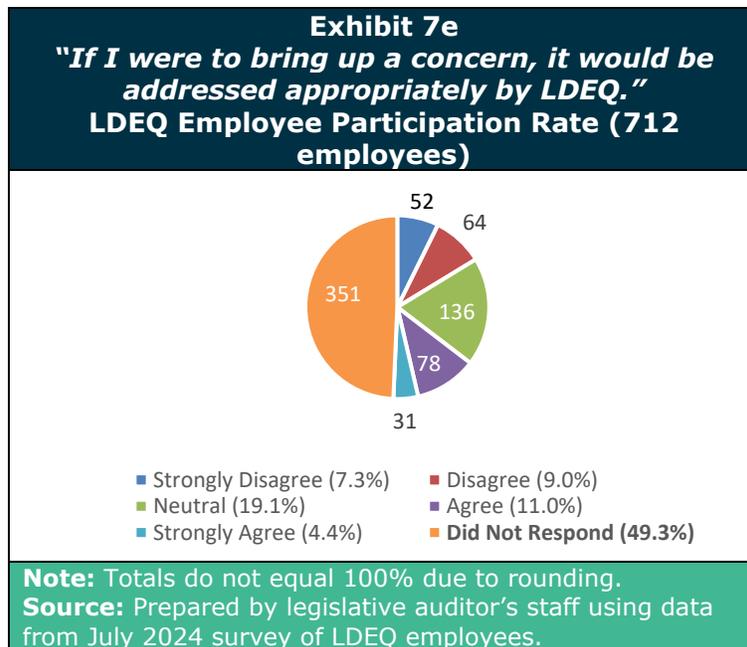
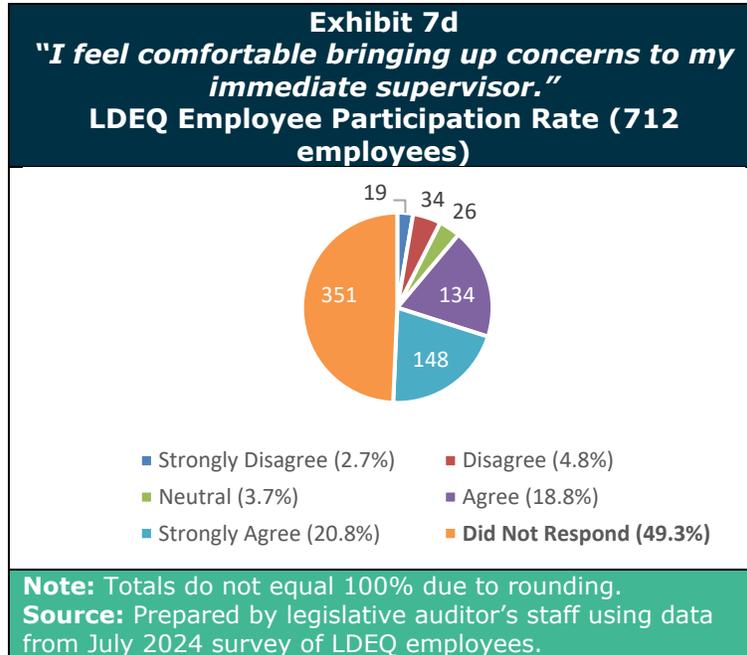
**156 (43.2%) of 361 survey respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that LDEQ fosters and encourages an agency culture that promotes its mission of comprehensive environmental protection in order to promote and protect health, safety, and welfare, as shown in Exhibit 7.**

Exhibit 7 Workplace Culture Results 361 responses out of 712 employees (50.7% response rate)						
Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
LDEQ fosters and encourages an agency culture that promotes its mission of comprehensive environmental protection in order to promote and protect health, safety, and welfare.	9.1%	34.1%	29.9%	18.0%	8.9%	<b>100%</b>
I work in a toxic environment.	15.8	17.7	20.8	29.4	16.3	<b>100%</b>
I feel physically safe while performing my job duties.	30.2	52.4	11.6	3.9	1.9	<b>100%</b>
I feel comfortable bringing up concerns to my immediate supervisor.	41.0	37.1	7.2	9.4	5.3	<b>100%</b>
If I were to bring up a concern, it would be addressed appropriately by LDEQ.	8.6%	21.6%	37.7%	17.7%	14.4%	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff using data from July 2024 survey of LDEQ employees.





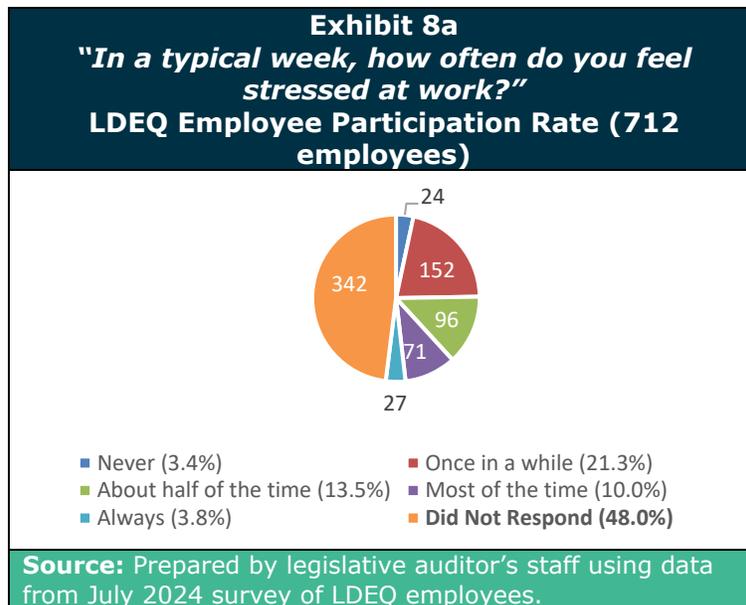


**165 (45.7%) of 361 of survey respondents "disagree" or "strongly disagree" that they work in a toxic environment, as shown in Exhibit 7.** Workers may refer to their workplace as toxic when they feel stress and perceive disrespect. When asked about stress, 98 (26.5%) of 370 of respondents indicated that they feel stressed at work "always" or "most of the time" during a typical week. As discussed earlier, the risks of a negative workplace culture included reduced job satisfaction and productivity.

Exhibits 8 and 9 contain the results of additional survey questions.

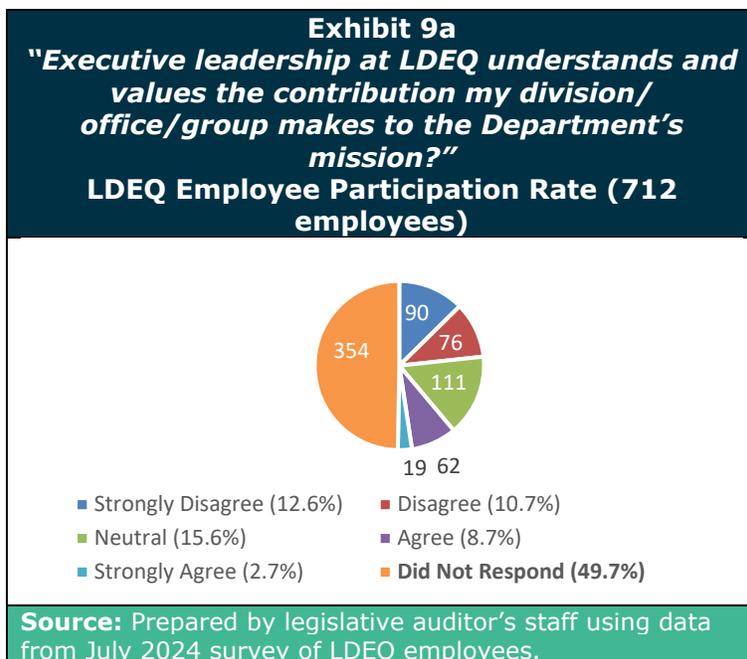
<b>Exhibit 8</b> <b>"In a typical week, how often do you feel stressed at work?"</b> <b>370 responses out of 712 employees</b> <b>(52.0% response rate)</b>	
Response	Percent
Never	6.5%
Once in a while	41.1
About half of the time	25.9
Most of the time	19.2
Always	7.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from July 2024 survey of LDEQ employees.



<b>Exhibit 9</b> <b>Executive Leadership</b> <b>358 responses out of 712 employees (50.3% response rate)</b>						
Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Executive leadership at LDEQ understands and values the contribution my division/office/group makes to the Department's mission?	5.3%	17.3%	31.1%	21.2%	25.1%	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from July 2024 survey of LDEQ employees.




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**Survey results indicate that the barriers that affect respondents' ability to do their job, or do it as well as they would like included inadequate staffing, technology, and training.**

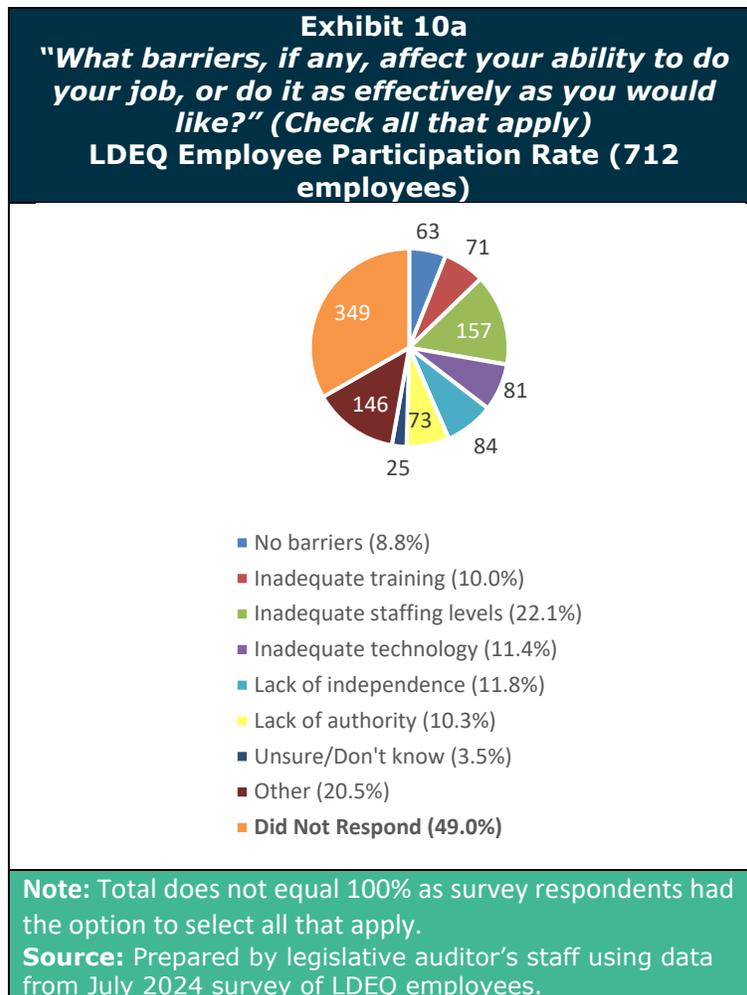
Productivity of a workforce is a function of the employees' commitment and motivation, as well as leadership effectiveness. Employees feel motivated when they are allowed to make decisions on their own and compete fairly, which improves their productivity and makes them loyal to an organization. Effective leadership is important in ensuring that employees are working optimally. If management within an organization shows that its workforce is valued, then the employees will be motivated to improve their productivity.

**When asked what barriers affect their ability to do their job, or do it as well as they would like, survey respondents mentioned inadequate staffing levels, a lack of independence and authority, and inadequate technology and training.** However, 63 (17.4%) of 363 respondents indicated that they do not face barriers affecting their ability to do their job. Exhibit 10 shows LDEQ employee responses related to barriers to job performance.

**Exhibit 10**  
**"What barriers, if any, affect your ability to do your job, or do it as effectively as you would like?"**  
*(Check all that apply)*  
**363 responses out of 712 employees**  
**(51.0% response rate)**

Responses	Percent*
No Barriers	17.4%
Inadequate Training	19.6%
Inadequate Staffing Levels	43.3%
Inadequate Technology	22.3%
Lack of independence	23.1%
Lack of authority	20.1%
Unsure/Don't Know	6.9%
Other	40.2%

\*Total does not equal 100% as survey respondents had the option to select all that apply.  
**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from July 2024 survey of LDEQ employees.



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**292 (80.9%) of 361 respondents felt no pressure to do something against the law, LDEQ policy, or Civil Service rules in the past six months (January through June 2024).**

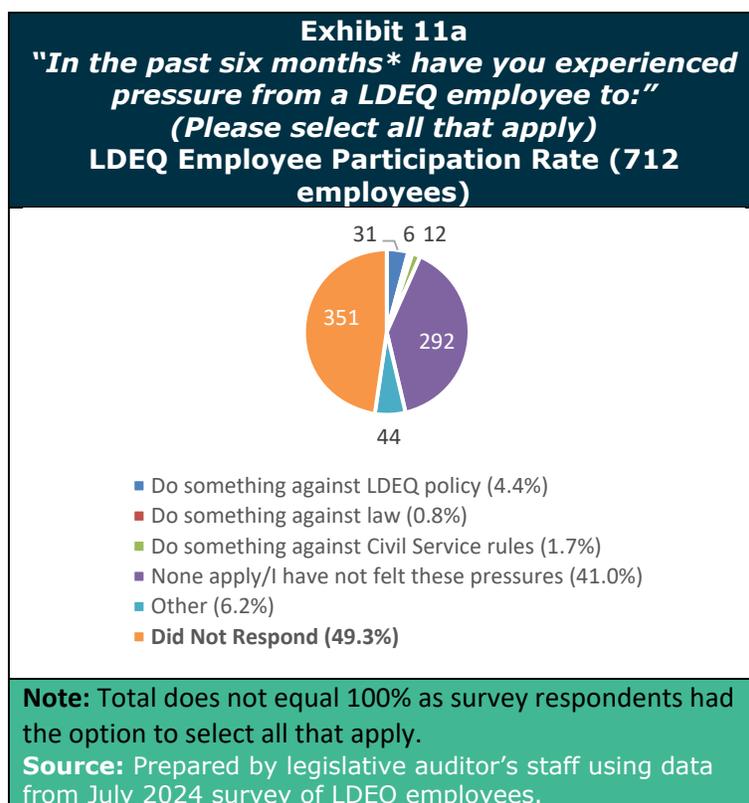
Enforcing laws is essential for LDEQ to achieve its mission. Enforcing workforce policies is essential for creating a productive work environment. Inconsistent enforcement of company policies may lead to confusion and a breakdown of trust between employees and management.

**While 292 (80.9%) of 361 survey respondents stated that they have felt no pressure in the last six months (January through June 2024) to do something against law, LDEQ policy, or Civil Service rules; 49 (13.6%) of 361 respondents have experienced these pressures, as shown in Exhibit 11.**<sup>7</sup> Concerns mentioned by survey respondents included pressure to not follow LDEQ policies related to closing sites and completing inspections. Respondents expressed concerns related to noncompliance with grant requirements and rules for contracts. Respondents also expressed concerns related to Human Resources and Department of State Civil Service policies related to compensatory time and leave. Some survey respondents expressed concern about a temporary directive to not communicate with outside entities, which according to survey respondents, impacted their ability to do their jobs.

<b>Exhibit 11</b>	
<b><i>"In the past six months* have you experienced pressure from a LDEQ employee to:"</i></b>	
<b><i>(Please select all that apply)</i></b>	
<b>361 responses out of 712 employees</b>	
<b>(50.7% response rate)</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Percent**</b>
Do something against LDEQ policy	8.6%
Do something against law	1.7
Do something against Civil Service Rules	3.3
None Apply/I have not felt these pressures	80.9
Other	12.2%
*January through June 2024	
**Total does not equal 100% as survey respondents had the option to select all that apply.	
<b>Source:</b> Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from July 2024 survey of LDEQ employees.	

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<sup>7</sup> Our scope did not include assessing the validity of employee perceptions of noncompliance with law, LDEQ policy, or Civil Service rules.




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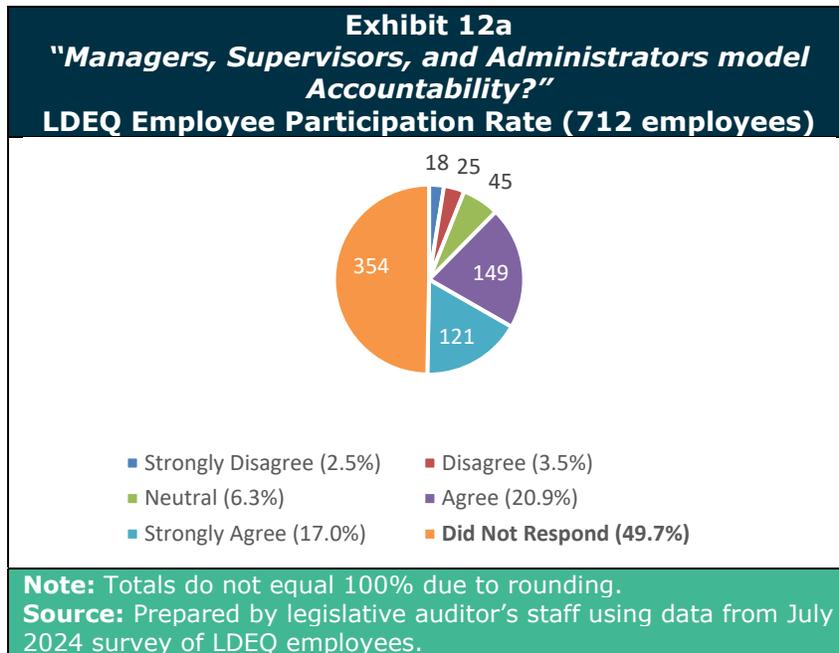
**More than 75% of respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" that their managers, supervisors, and administrators model qualities such as integrity, respect, and empathy.**

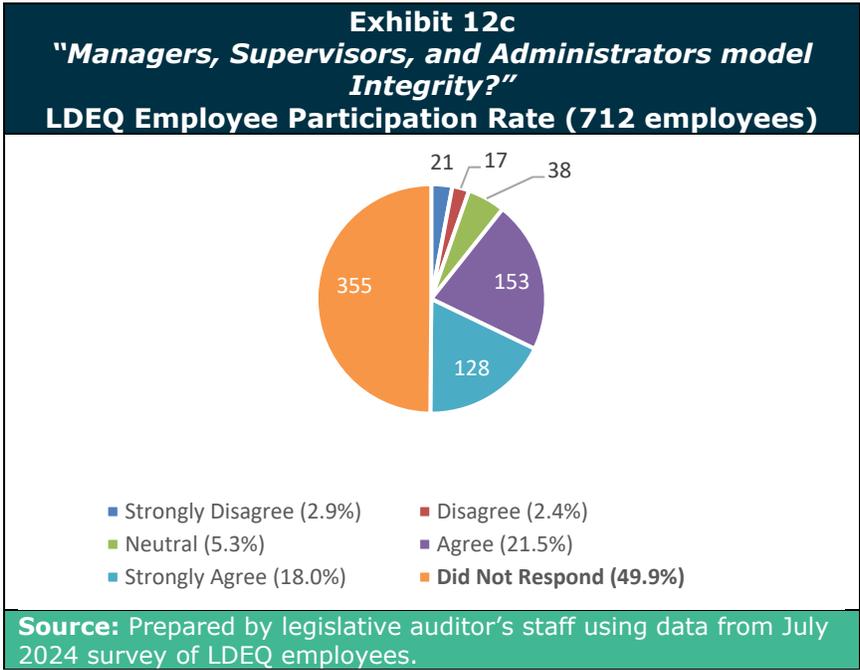
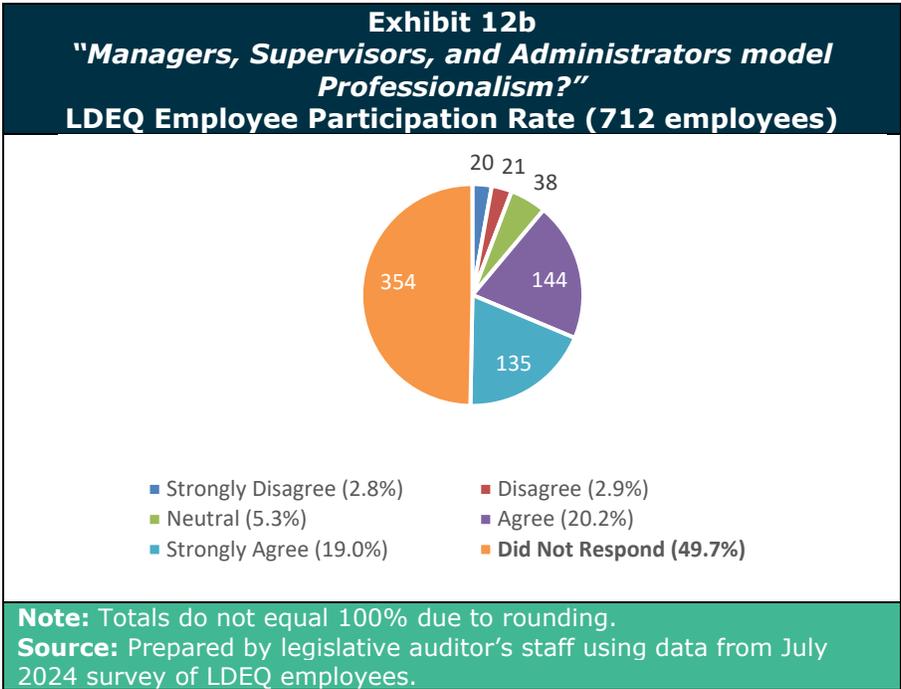
An effective leader is someone who creates a safe and trusting work environment; provides clear direction to employees while allowing them to organize their time and work; builds a strong foundation for connection through frequent and open communication; shows openness to new ideas and fosters organizational learning; and shows a commitment to employee growth. Job satisfaction and productivity are affected by leadership behaviors.

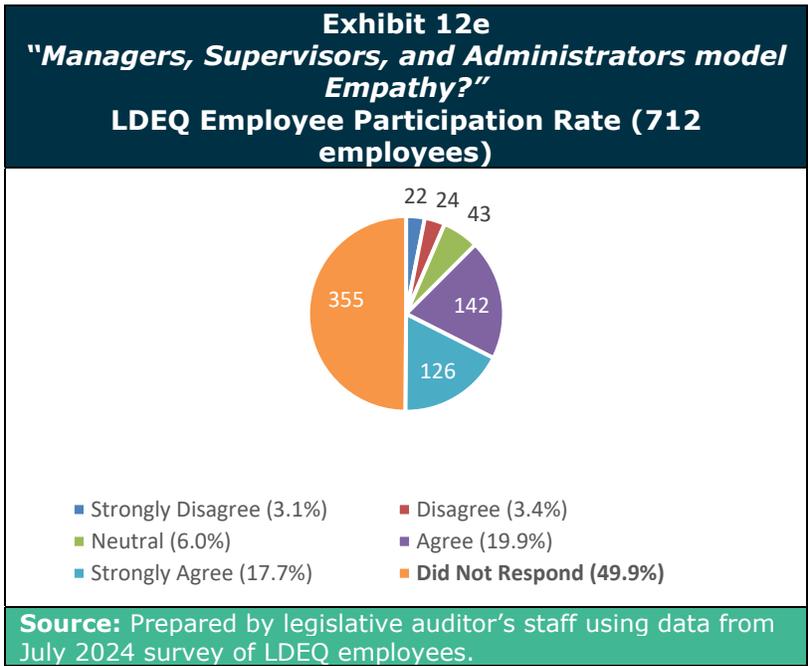
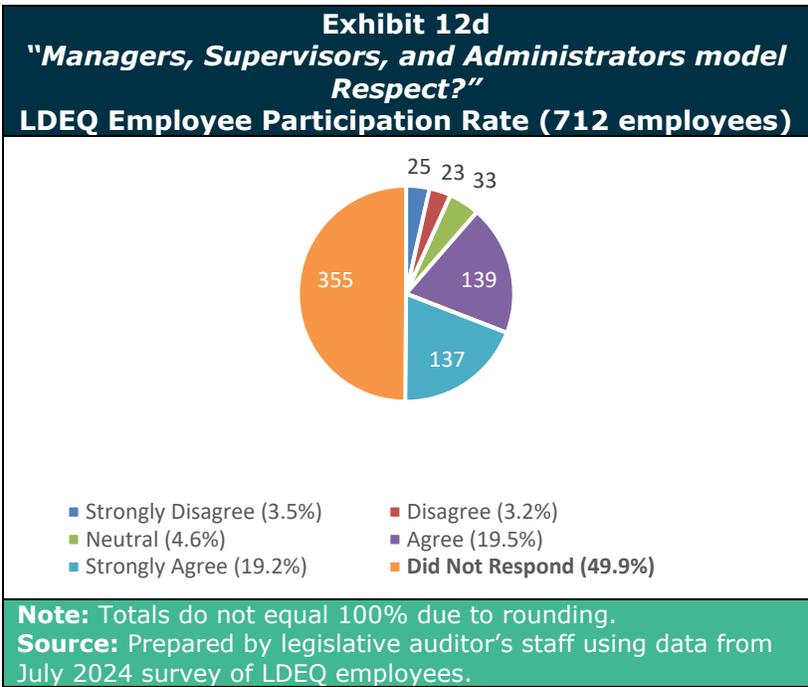
**According to our survey, 257 (72.0%) of 357 survey respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" that managers, supervisors, and administrators model the quality of leadership.** Exhibits 12 and 13 show the percent of survey respondents who "agree" or "strongly agree" that managers, supervisors, administrators, and executive leadership model certain qualities.

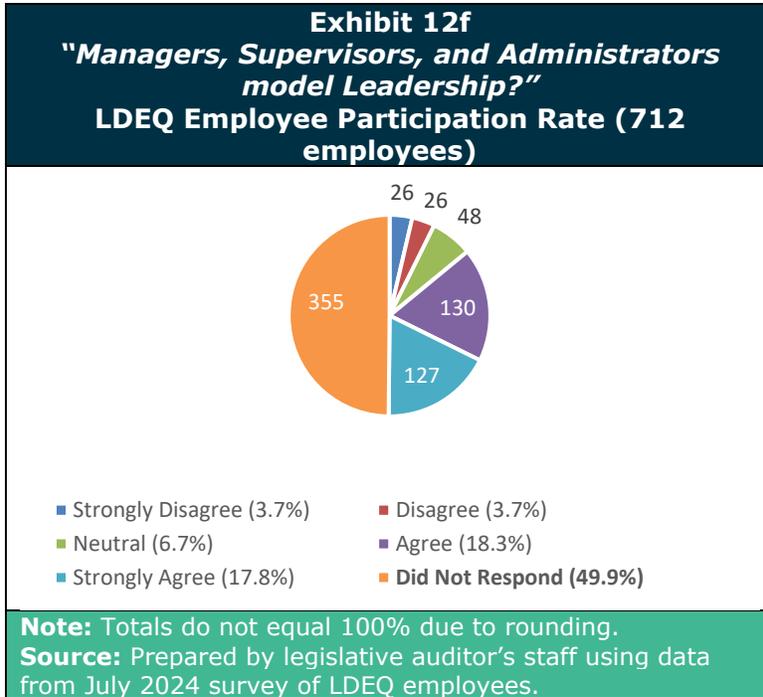
<b>Exhibit 12</b> <b>"Managers, Supervisors, and Administrators model the following qualities?"</b> <b>357-358 responses out of 712 employees (50.1-50.3% response rate)</b>						
Quality	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Accountability	33.8%	41.6%	12.6%	7.0%	5.0%	<b>100%</b>
Professionalism	37.7	40.2	10.6	5.9	5.6	<b>100%</b>
Integrity	35.9	42.9	10.5	4.8	5.9	<b>100%</b>
Respect	38.4	38.9	9.3	6.4	7.0	<b>100%</b>
Empathy	35.3	39.8	12.0	6.7	6.2	<b>100%</b>
Leadership	35.6%	36.4%	13.4%	7.3%	7.3%	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from July 2024 survey of LDEQ employees.





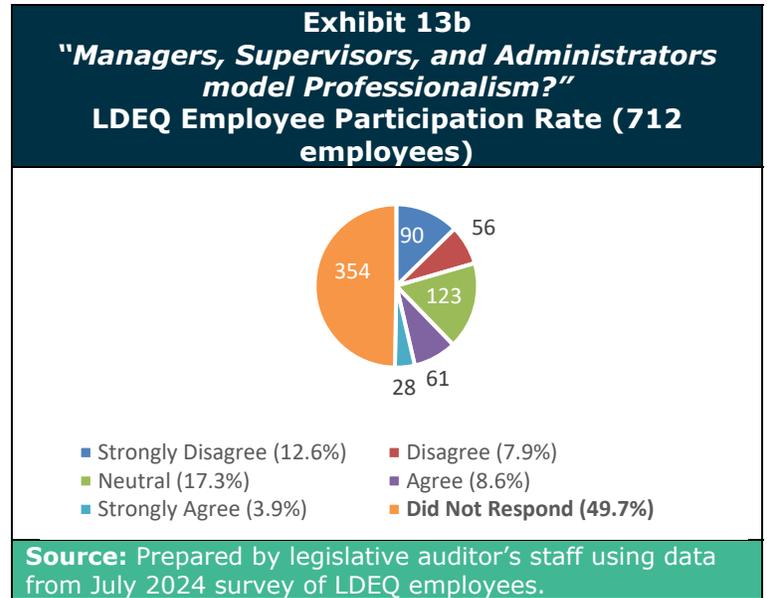
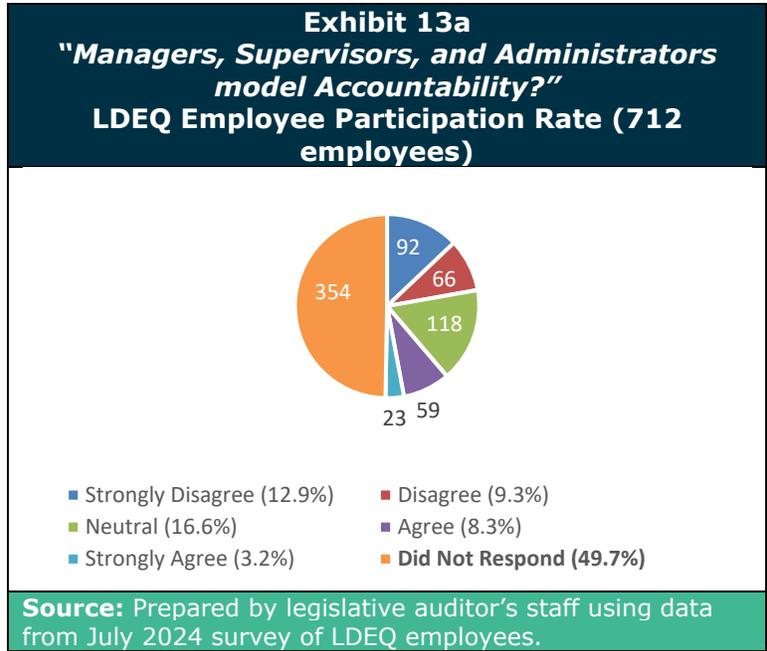


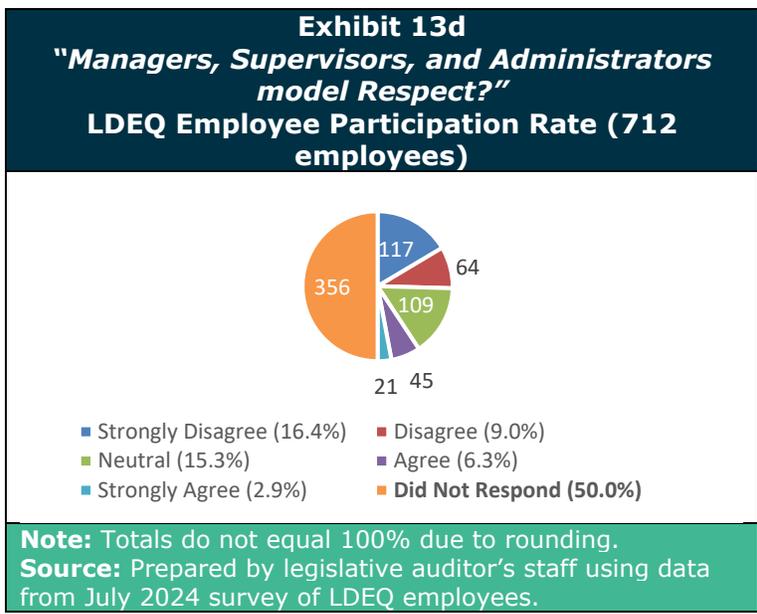
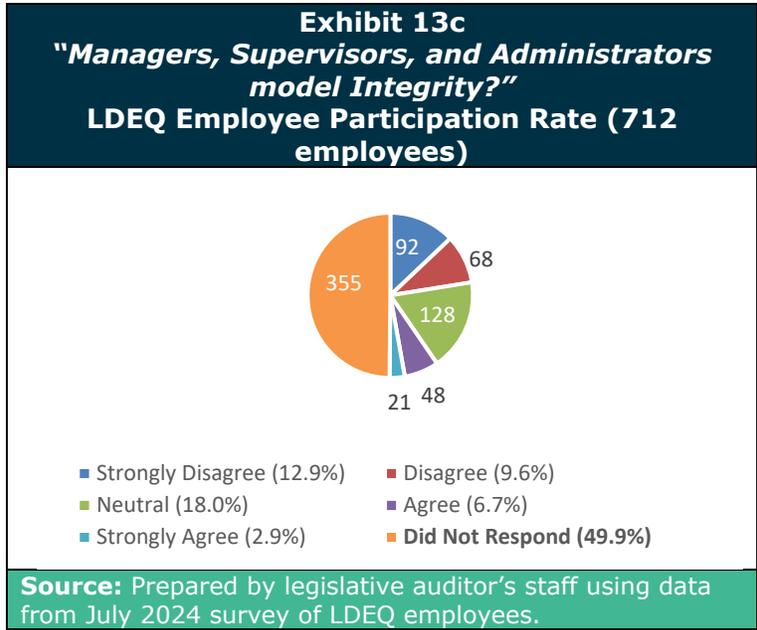


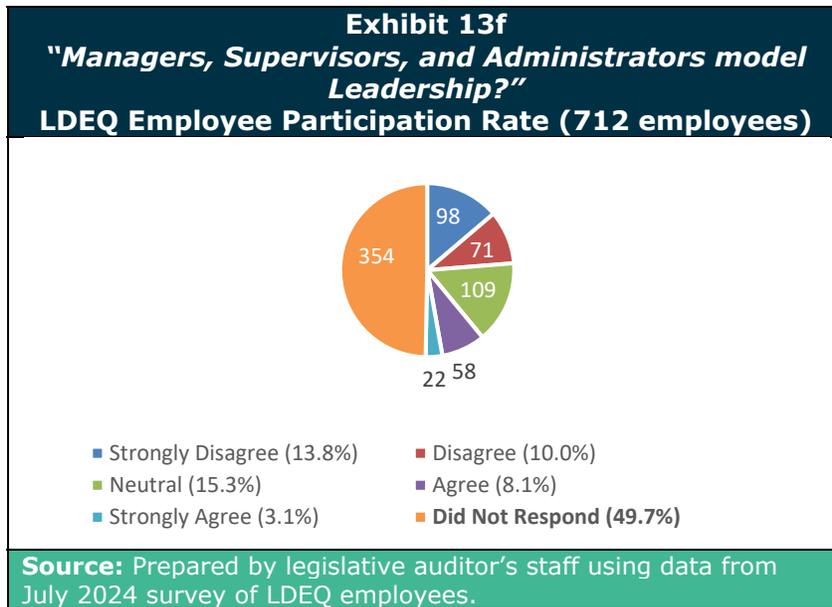
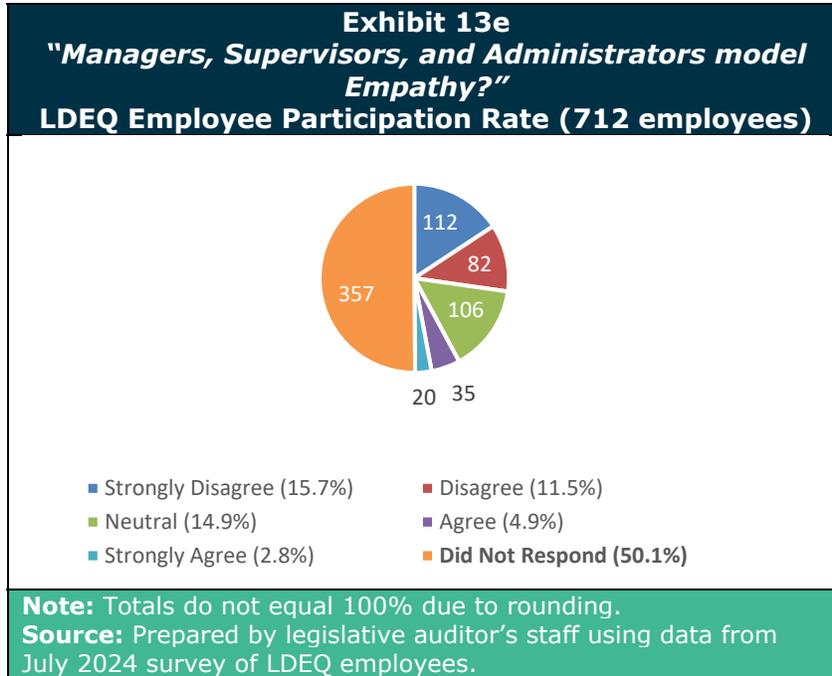
**Exhibit 13**  
**"LDEQ Executive Leadership model the following qualities?"**  
**355-358 responses out of 712 employees (49.9-50.3% response rate)**

Quality	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Accountability	6.4%	16.5%	33.0%	18.4%	25.7%	<b>100%</b>
Professionalism	7.8	17.0	34.5	15.6	25.1	<b>100%</b>
Integrity	5.9	13.4	35.9	19.0	25.8	<b>100%</b>
Respect	5.9	12.6	30.6	18.0	32.9	<b>100%</b>
Empathy	5.6	9.9	29.9	23.1	31.5	<b>100%</b>
Leadership	6.1%	16.2%	30.5%	19.8%	27.4%	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff using data from July 2024 survey of LDEQ employees.







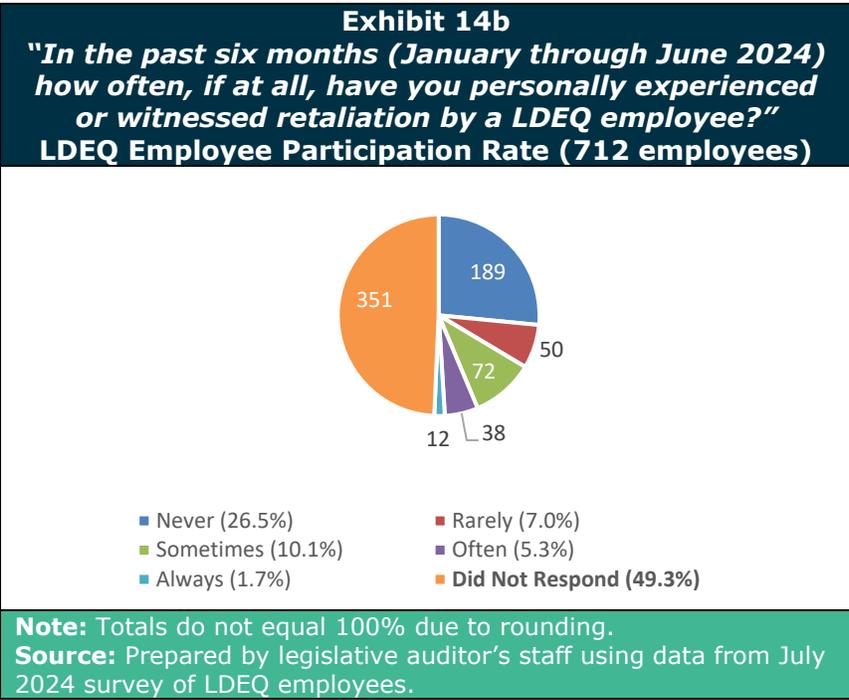
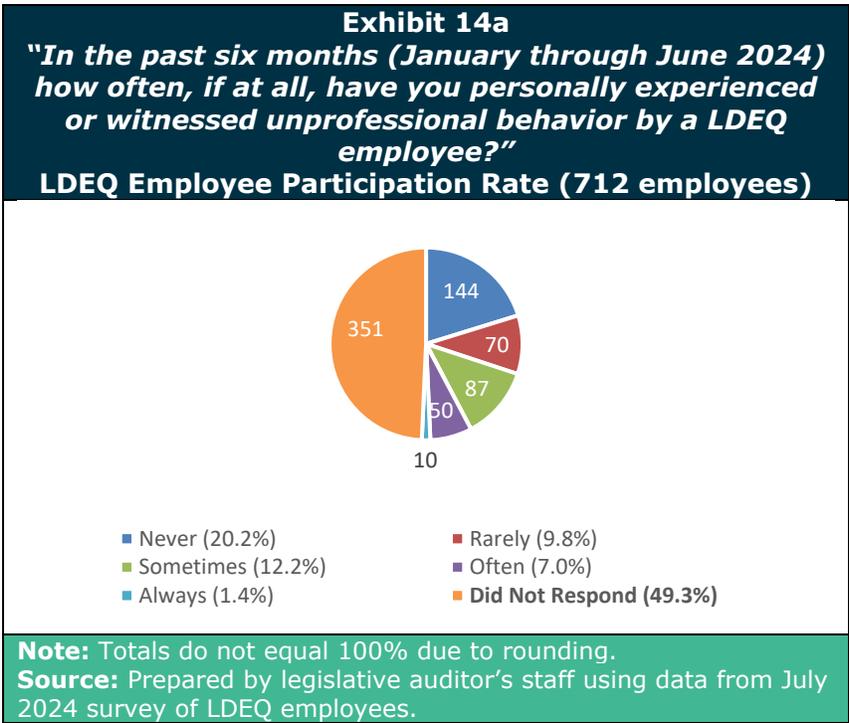
**When asked whether employees feel that they are treated with respect and feel appreciated by their supervisor, manager, and/or administrator, 280 (76.3%) of 367 survey respondents “agree” or “strongly agree,” while 82 (22.3%) “agree” or “strongly agree” that executive leadership treats them with respect and appreciates them.** In addition, 81 (22.6%) of 358 survey respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that executive leadership at LDEQ understands and values the contribution that their division, office, or group makes to the Department’s mission. When survey respondents were asked what changes could be made to improve leadership at LDEQ, respondents’ suggestions included leadership should improve the way they

treat employees, obtain more knowledge about LDEQ’s processes, and trust employees.

**214 (59.3%) of 361 survey respondents indicated that they have “never” or “rarely” personally experienced or witnessed unprofessional behavior in the past six months (January through June 2024).**

Professionalism includes the way individuals carry themselves, their attitude, and the way that they communicate with others. Qualities of professionalism include being accountable for assignments, commitments, and deadlines; being attentive, responsible, and proactive; learning about workplace culture within an agency, being respectful of your organization and coworkers, keeping personal matters to a minimum, and prioritizing entity success over personal wins. Of 361 survey respondents, 214 (59.3%) indicated that they have “never” or “rarely” personally experienced or witnessed unprofessional behavior from an LDEQ employee in the past six months (January through June 2024), as shown in Exhibit 14.

Exhibit 14 Unprofessional Behavior and Retaliation Results 361 responses out of 712 employees (50.7% response rate)						
Question	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total
In the past six months (January through June 2024) how often, if at all, have you personally experienced or witnessed <b>unprofessional behavior</b> by a LDEQ employee? <i>Unprofessional behavior may include, but is not limited to, yelling, demeaning comments, harassment, intimidation, etc.</i>	39.9%	19.4%	24.1%	13.8%	2.8%	<b>100%</b>
In the past six months (January through June 2024) how often, if at all, have you personally experienced or witnessed <b>retaliation</b> by a LDEQ employee? <i>Retaliation may include, but is not limited to, changes to job and working conditions, relocation, changes to performance evaluations, etc.</i>	52.4%	13.9%	19.9%	10.5%	3.3%	<b>100%</b>
<b>Source:</b> Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff using data from July 2024 survey of LDEQ employees.						



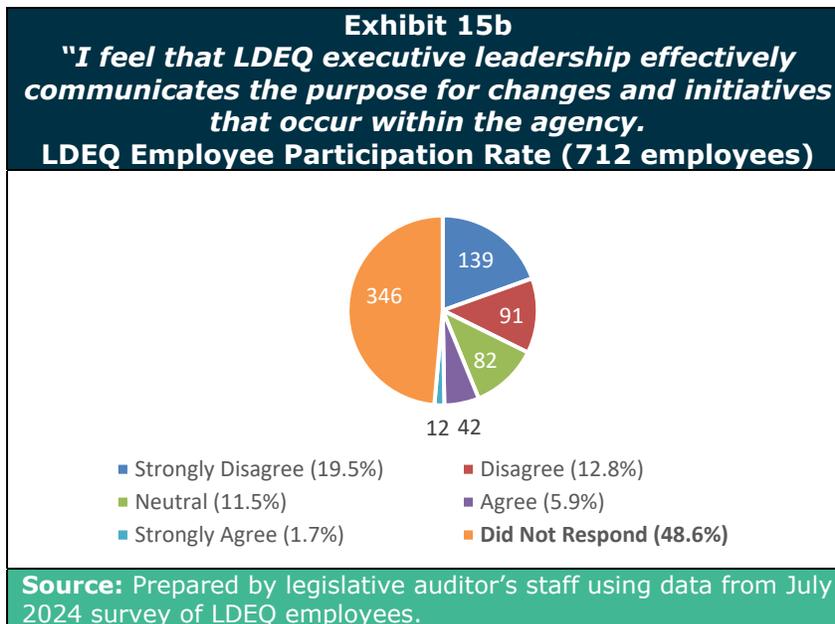
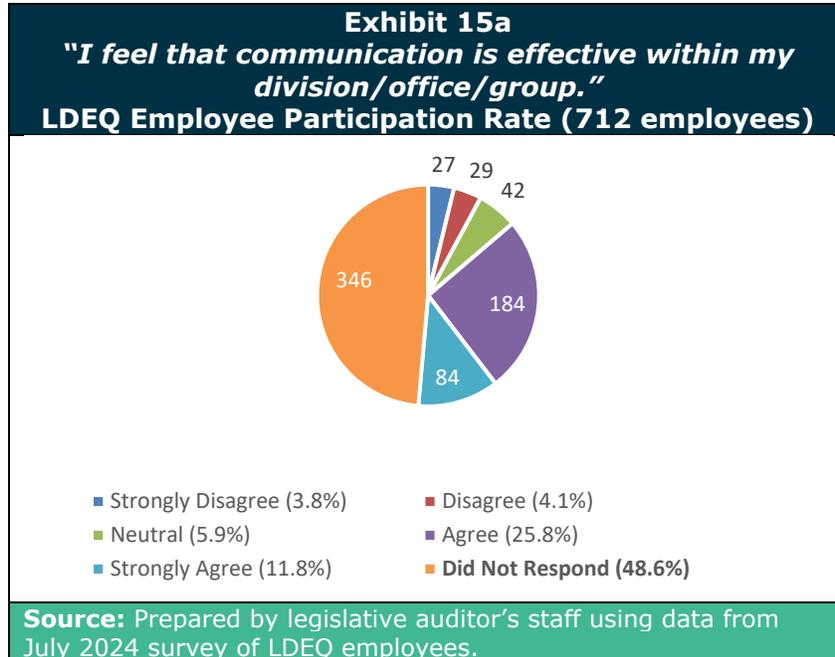
**268 (73.2%) of 366 respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that communication is effective within their division/office/group, and 54 (14.8%) of 366 “agree” or “strongly agree” that LDEQ executive leadership effectively communicates the purpose for changes and initiatives that occur within the agency.**

Clear and effective communication from leadership offers a multitude of benefits to employers and employees. One such benefit is that it keeps employees aware of individual and organizational goals. When workers understand what is expected of them, they are more likely to be able to deliver the desired results, which can help improve job satisfaction and morale.

When asked about communication, 268 (73.2%) of 366 survey respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that communication is effective within my division/office/group. 54 (14.8%) “agree” or “strongly agree” that LDEQ executive leadership effectively communicates the purpose for changes and initiatives that occur within the agency, as shown in Exhibit 15.

<b>Exhibit 15</b>						
<b>Communication Results</b>						
<b>366 responses out of 712 employees (51.4% response rate)</b>						
<b>Question</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
I feel that communication is effective within my division/office/group.	23.0%	50.3%	11.4%	7.9%	7.4%	<b>100%</b>
I feel that LDEQ executive leadership effectively communicates the purpose for changes and initiatives that occur within the agency.	3.3%	11.5%	22.3%	24.9%	38.0%	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff using data from July 2024 survey of LDEQ employees.





## **APPENDIX A: MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE**

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**STATE OF LOUISIANA**  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

February 28, 2025

Mr. Michael Waguespack  
Louisiana Legislative Auditor  
1600 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

**Re: Response to Louisiana Legislative Auditor's "Workplace Culture Survey" of LDEQ**

Dear Mr. Waguespack:

Thank you for conducting an audit of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) which certifies and confirms LDEQ has met, and even exceeded, its mission to provide comprehensive environmental protection in order to promote and protect the health, safety and welfare to the people of Louisiana. As noted in your report, the business community rated LDEQ's performance during the first six months of the current administration to be **as good as, and in some cases better**, than the prior administration.

You have admittedly (and inexplicably) chosen not to abide by Governmental Auditing Standards in issuing the report and the report contains a lot of data, some of which is not particularly useful or relevant to the operations of LDEQ. Although there are real concerns about the external validity of the data contained in your report, there is one statistic that stands out: **A vast majority (that is, nearly 90%) of LDEQ employees enjoy working at LDEQ and employees are satisfied with their jobs at LDEQ.** We believe this result speaks for itself. The current administration has implemented rapid changes to make LDEQ more efficient and responsive, and this speaks volumes as to the talent and resiliency of the great majority of employees at LDEQ.

I, as Secretary, am very proud of the hard working employees of LDEQ and their dedication to the mission. And I am not going to allow some disgruntled employees to undermine the great work of this agency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Aurelia S. Giacometto".

Secretary Aurelia S. Giacometto



## APPENDIX B: SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

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This informational report provides the results of our workplace culture survey of employees of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ). The scope of our review covered the period of January 1, 2024, through June 30, 2024. We conducted this survey under the provisions of Title 24 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, as amended.

Informational reports are intended to provide more timely information than standards-based performance audits. While these informational reports do not follow *Government Auditing Standards*, we conduct quality assurance activities to ensure the information presented is accurate.

To conduct our survey, we performed the following steps:

- Met with LDEQ to discuss the project, our process, and to get feedback and input from the Secretary about the project.
- Requested a list of all current LDEQ employees as of May 31, 2024, and informed LDEQ that we would be emailing all LDEQ employees about the project and requesting interviews to obtain their feedback to help LLA develop the survey.
- Emailed all LDEQ employees about the project, that we would be scheduling interviews, and to request any additional feedback on potential survey questions.
- Interviewed approximately 33 DEQ employees. Interviewees were selected from all LDEQ sections and included employees from various LDEQ job titles, and hire dates ranging from newer employees to those with more experience. We also selected employees working at the main office and at regional offices.
  - In addition to the employees we selected, some employees requested to meet with us. We also received feedback via email from various DEQ employees.
  - Met with LDEQ Secretary to obtain feedback about the project, experiences at LDEQ, expected survey results, and initiatives had implemented to promote positive workplace culture.
- Researched a variety of informational publications concerning workplace culture.
- Met with four industry stakeholders and obtained feedback from an additional industry stakeholder regarding their working relationship with LDEQ, including any recent changes.

- Based on our interviews, we created survey questions using Survey Monkey. Survey questions were modeled on those asked by the Office of Washington State Auditor in its September 2021 performance audit “Assessing the Workplace Culture at the Department of Fish and Wildlife.”
  - Independent auditors with expertise in survey design reviewed draft questions for bias, leading or loaded language, and overall clarity.
  - Provided draft survey questions to LDEQ and requested feedback. LDEQ responded that it had no feedback.
- Used SurveyMonkey to survey 712 LDEQ employees in July 2024 to obtain feedback on the organizational culture at LDEQ. We received responses from 377 employees, achieving an overall response rate of 52.9%. The number of responses varied by question, because not all employees answered all questions.
  - SurveyMonkey does not allow multiple responses for email invitations. Each contact can only respond to an email invitation once. Prior to sending the survey, we conducted tests to ensure that the survey link could only be completed once.
- Summarized and analyzed survey responses to provide information on employee perspectives related to the workplace culture at LDEQ. The results were not intended to be projected to the entire LDEQ employee population.
  - An independent auditor with specialized training in survey analysis conducted a non-response bias analysis based on staff positions, their rank/seniority, cost centers, and organizational units in both the population of LDEQ staff that received the survey and those who responded. Based on this analysis, the independent auditor concluded that the respondent sample was representative of the population of LDEQ staff, and there was no systematic non-response bias present.

## APPENDIX C: SOURCES

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To understand concepts related to workplace culture, we researched various relevant topics. Our sources are cited below.

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