

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Administrative Policy No.: 7

EFFECTIVE DATE: JULY 15, 2015

**SUBJECT: NEWS MEDIA, PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND
INFORMATION REQUESTS**

AUTHORIZATION: STEPHEN CHUSTZ, SECRETARY

I. POLICY

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regularly receives requests for information regarding the department's operations, programs, services and activities. As a public service, DNR's policy is to promptly and accurately respond to such requests unless the information sought is privileged, confidential or otherwise prohibited from disclosure by law. To ensure timely, thorough responses and to preclude the unauthorized disclosure of information, the Secretary has designated certain employees to receive and process such requests. For this reason, unless otherwise directed, only the employees designated herein are responsible for and authorized to act as spokespersons for the department in responding to information requests.

II. PURPOSE

Compliance with this policy facilitates DNR's ability to timely, accurately and appropriately respond to requests for information regarding the operations, programs, services and activities of the department.

III. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to:

- 1) All DNR employees; and
- 2) Specific, substantive inquiries regarding the operations, programs, services and activities of the department.

This policy does not apply to:

- 1) Routine and general inquiries regarding the department's operations, programs, services and activities; and

- 2) All requests for public records pursuant to Louisiana's Public Records Law (La. R.S. 44:1 et seq.), which records immediately must be referred to the DNR Legal Division for processing.

IV. PROCEDURE

All requests for specific or substantive information regarding the operations, programs, services and activities of the department that are not readily available and accessible via the respective Office's websites are to be routed by employees to the Public Information Section. The Public Information Director will assess the nature, scope and source of the request and provide either a timely and thorough response or forward the request to the appropriate designee.

Requests for information from the following sources will be handled by:

- 1) News Media Requests – The Public Information Director and/or the Communications Director will respond to all requests for information from the news media (print, radio & television);
- 2) Public Official Requests – The Chief of Staff will respond or direct staff to respond to all requests for information from governmental bodies and public officials, particularly members of the Louisiana Legislature and Congress; and
- 3) Legal Requests – Each Office's attorneys or, as warranted, the Legal Division will respond to all non-routine requests for information from attorneys/law firms or related to threatened or pending legal proceedings.

Where applicable, the Public Information Director will coordinate the gathering of information needed to properly respond to information requests. DNR personnel within each Office are required to cooperate and provide assistance to the Public Information Director when called upon to do so.


NOTE: The Public Information Director, in addition to directing inquiries to the Communications Director, Chief of Staff, Office's attorneys and Legal Division, is responsible for notifying the Secretary of any requests for information that are of concern, problematic or involve sensitive information.

V. EXCEPTIONS

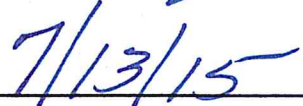
There shall be no exceptions to the requirements of this policy.

VI. QUESTIONS

Questions regarding this policy should be addressed to the Public Information Division.



STEPHEN CHUSTZ, SECRETARY



DATE

INITIAL ISSUE DATE: 08/99

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