

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE OREGON FROM WITHIN

A Formative Review Of The State Of Oregon's Sustainability Initiative

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An Appendix is contained under a separate cover that includes:

- A. Copy of the Survey Instrument with Response Rates
- B. Compendium of Comments on Suggestions and Barriers Offered by Respondents and Interviewees

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This report summarizes the results of a formative review of the State of Oregon's efforts to adopt sustainability measures. In May 2000 Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber signed Executive Order No. EO-00-07 (EO) directing Oregon state government to develop policies and programs that will assist Oregon in meeting a goal of sustainability within one generation – by 2025. In 2001 the Oregon Legislature enacted House Bill (HB) 3948, making the adoption of sustainability measures within state government part of state law. For the purposes of this report, the combination of the Governor's EO and HB 3948 is referred to as the State of Oregon's "Sustainability Initiative," or simply the "Initiative."

This review was undertaken to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the process of institutionalizing sustainability into everyday state agency operations and to identify actions that could enhance the success of the Initiative over time. The review was also undertaken as a learning experience for University of Oregon graduate students Ben Farrell, Melanie Mintz, and Adam Zimmerman, who did the majority of the planning, research and writing. Bob Doppelt, Director of the Center for Watershed and Community Health, and Dr. John Baldwin, University of Oregon Associate Professor of Planning, Public Policy and Management, supervised the project.

The State of Oregon's Initiative is a unique effort that directs state agencies to adopt sustainability measures in internal operations as a first step toward meeting the broad goals of sustainability. Because the Initiative is just over two years old, this review is not a report card grading the efforts of the State; the Initiative is too young for this type of review to be helpful. As a "formative" review, the intent is to show whether the *process* has been designed and is being implemented in ways that are likely to lead to success. Because the primary focus of this review is on process, we did not examine the specific content of any particular policy or programmatic change. The review is intended to provide information that the Governor, agency directors, staff, legislators, and stakeholders can use to make adjustments to the process and expand their efforts beyond the start-up stage.

Process

The review is based on information obtained from written surveys mailed to a selected sample of 308 state employees that represent 21 agencies and 24 phone interviews conducted with current and former staff from the governor's office, agency directors, senior managers, line staff, and key external stakeholders. The analysis is based on a combination of the data received in the surveys and comments received during the phone interviews. 101 surveys were returned, representing a return rate of 32.8%. Survey data and notes from anonymous phone interviews are available upon request from the Center for Watershed and Community Health.

Framework for Analysis

For purpose of analysis, we utilized a framework that allowed us to group the results of our review into nine categories. The categories represent the key phases of the process

that research by the Center for Watershed and Community Health has found to be used by public organizations that are leading the way towards integrating sustainability into their operations. While the process of incorporating sustainability into organization operations is not linear, the elements form a natural progression. Each step provides a foundation for the next. The steps are explained in more detail in the body of the report.

The phases include:

- Providing Effective Leadership
- Making A Compelling Case for Adopting Sustainability Measures Within Government.
- Organizing Broad-Based Guiding Teams.
- Developing a Clear and Inspiring Vision of Sustainability.
- Adopting Operational and “People-Change” Strategies.
- Relentlessly Communicating The Vision And Strategies To Employees And Stakeholders.
- Rewarding Learning and Innovation To Achieve Stair-Cased Successes.
- Explicitly Removing Systems And Structural Barriers.
- Systematically Driving Sustainability Into the Policies, Procedures, and Culture of State Government.

Findings

A. Successes

The majority of people who mailed their surveys back to us and the majority of those we interviewed by phone said that the Initiative got off to a good start, that a number of positive steps have been taken and outcomes achieved, and that significant potential exists to achieve even more in the future that would benefit state government and the public. If a number of the additional steps that research has shown are important for making progress toward sustainable development, state government would be poised to achieve greater success. More specifically, successes have included the following:

- In general, people feel that the Initiative got off to a good start. Through his EO and follow-up steps, respondents believe that the Governor and his staff initially made a solid the case for the importance of adopting sustainable practices.
- Survey and phone respondents have a fair understanding of the vision and purpose of the Initiative. This is a positive sign given the difficulty of disseminating the purpose of a new initiative to an entity the size of state government.
- As a result of the above, a number of positive outcomes have occurred:
 - Over half of the responses indicated that their agency had reduced their resource use via recycling, energy conservation, better building and facilities management decisions, and purchasing policies.

- Several agencies have adopted innovative solutions to achieving sustainability. A few examples include:
 - The Department of Corrections (DoC) diverted used waste denim that was going to landfills to a non-profit charity that is using the material to make “Ecofiber” dog beds and other products in a way that creates jobs for low income members of the community.
 - The Employment Appeals Board revisited its paper practices and reduced its paper use by approximately 90% by publishing and delivering all of its reports and decisions via electronic discs.¹
 - The Department of Housing and Community Services initiated a Green Building Project which has included providing green building training to affordable housing developers, publishing information on environmentally sensitive buildings practices, and reserving a portion of its Residential Loan Program funds to help low-income, first-time homebuyers purchase energy efficient homes.²
 - Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) moved into downtown Baker City fulfilling the Initiative’s goals of revitalizing rural areas and helping to maintain vital and active downtown areas. OPRD has also initiated turning Tumalo State Park into a net power provider through the use of solar energy production.
- The Initiative has given those interested in sustainability within state government a platform from which to work and enhanced the ability of people within and external to government to openly discuss the issues.

B. *Limitations/Obstacles*

Although many positive outcomes have been achieved, our research found that continued improvement will require that a number of challenges be addressed. For example:

- Although the initial push from the Governor’s office was good, respondents feel that mid-level administrative follow through was inadequate and there is a lack of clarity on how agencies and employees should proceed to implement sustainability measures.
- Few leadership teams have been organized within individual agencies or units to guide the development and implementation of the Initiative at those levels.

¹ Oregon Solutions Governor’s Sustainability Awards website www.oregonsolutions.net , 10/7/02

² Ibid

- Due to the lack of guiding teams, many agencies have not translated the broad vision and goals described in the EO and legislation into specifically tailored, clear, departmental, unit, and program specific visions and goals for pursuing sustainability.
- In large part because the vision and goals have not been tailored for individual agencies, most agencies have not developed strategies to achieve sustainability and the focus has consequently remained primarily on tactical steps (e.g. projects).
- The lack of overarching strategies has undoubtedly contributed to the concern voiced by a majority of those who returned the surveys that they are unclear about the specific steps they should take to implement sustainability measures.
- The Initiative suffers from insufficient communication about the need, purpose, vision, and strategies.
- Less than one third of the survey respondents said they have been asked about their ideas for pursuing sustainability measures and few rewards or incentives have been provided for the pursuit of innovative ideas to achieve sustainability.
- Few steps have been taken to imbed sustainability into agency policies, operations, and culture (although this process usually occurs after a number of years of testing and experience).
- Leadership appears to be inconsistent. The Governor's office is no longer providing consistent leadership. Some agency directors seem to provide consistent direction and require accountability while others do not.

Recommendations

Achieving sustainability within one generation will require concerted ongoing effort. Key recommendations that emerged as a result of our findings include:

1. Provide Consistent Effective Leadership.

Despite the fact that the pursuit of sustainability measures is now an Executive Order and part of state law, for additional progress to be made it will be important for leadership at all levels of state government to continually reiterate the importance of the Initiative. One of the most important underlying themes we learned from the surveys and interviews is that while leadership was initially good, it is lacking today within the Governor's office and many state agencies. Part of the problem undoubtedly relates to the budget crisis that has diverted attention. Yet, many respondents said that the Initiative holds significant potential to save money and generate other benefits that could help reduce budget shortfalls. Achieving these outcomes will require strong committed leadership. The Governor and staff should continually and clearly declare that the adoption of sustainability measures is a top priority. The Governor should demand accountability by requiring that agencies adopt clear measurable benchmarks and targets for achieving sustainability and regularly report on their progress in meeting those goals. In turn, agency directors should set agency and program specific benchmarks and targets and

demand accountability by requiring regular progress updates from their staff. Symbolic acts should be used to demonstrate commitment to the Initiative; state leaders should also “walk the talk” and lead by example.

2. Form Teams to Plan and Lead the Initiative.

Because so many written survey and phone respondents feel that leadership is now lacking and because so many people said that few strategies for achieving sustainability had been developed, it may prove very beneficial to organize leadership teams (also called “transition teams” or “guiding coalitions”) within each agency, unit, and program to guide the development and implementation of strategies. Broad-based involvement is the only way to generate understanding, commitment, and effective problem solving. Although in the short run the formation of teams may seem to add extra work to already busy workloads, the integration and synergy that may occur as a result of unified and coordinated efforts to achieve sustainability may reduce workloads and save money in the mid- to long-run.

3. Clarify What Is To Be Achieved At Each Level of State Government.

Many respondents said they did not understand how to apply the broad-based vision developed by Governor Kitzhaber and legislature to their daily activities. The visions provided by the Governor and the 2001 legislature are, of necessity, broad in nature. Agency and unit specific transition teams should now take the time to translate the broad vision into visions applicable to their mission and work. Research shows that the best way to develop a vision is to first ask what the *ideal* condition of sustainability would be, and then to move backwards to ask what the *closest quickly achievable approximation* to the ideal is. Achieving the closest approximation to the ideal vision of sustainability should be the first focus. A plan can then be made to close the gap that remains between the ideal and its nearest approximation.

4. Design Operational and People-Change Strategies.

Once the transition teams have clarified their intent (vision), two types of strategies should be developed: one focused on adopting the operational and policy changes needed to achieve the sustainability vision and one focused on helping state employees understand and adopt sustainability-based thinking, perspectives and behaviors. Both strategies should be integrated with each agency’s daily work so that everyday and long-term decisions become consistent with the overall vision of sustainability.

5. Build a Common Understanding of the Sustainability Vision and Strategies.

One of the most common themes we heard in the review was that there is a lack of education and communication about sustainability. Once transition teams have developed locally tailored clear visions and strategies, efforts should be made to relentlessly communicate them to agency employees, stakeholders, and others. The power of good visions and strategies can be unleashed only when people develop good understanding of them. Developing this understanding requires constant education and communication.

6. Solicit Employee Ideas and Support Learning and Creative Problem-Solving.

Less than one third of the state employees who returned written surveys said they had been asked for their ideas about how to pursue sustainability measures. This suggests that agency employees are not actively involved in decision-making regarding sustainability. Lack of involvement undoubtedly constrains learning. Survey respondents also identified numerous barriers to continued progress with the sustainability Initiative. These two issues may provide the seeds of success. If state employees can be actively encouraged to propose and test new ideas to achieve sustainability and are rewarded for their involvement in the process, they may identify innovative ways to overcome many of the obstacles (including the current lack of funding). Encouraging and rewarding learning and innovation aimed at overcoming key barriers may unleash the creativity of the State workforce and generate innovations and success that currently seem impossible. Efforts today may yield results that reduce costs and workloads in the not so distant future.

7. Initiate Steps to Embed Sustainability Into Government Operations and Culture.

Although it usually takes three to four years for the most effective type of thinking and behaving to emerge in any major organizational change initiative, it is not too early for state agencies to begin to embed sustainability into their policies, procedures, and culture. For example, sustainability could be included in employee job performance evaluations. Promotions, bonuses, and other rewards could be tied, in part, to performance on sustainability. Agencies could review their policies and procedures to determine the extent to which they encourage unsustainable behavior and take steps to amend them so that they foster sustainability-based thinking and actions. Because it takes many years to institutionalize a new approach, it may be in the State's best interest to start the process now.

Additional detail on recommendations is provided in the full report.

Note: An appendix is contained under a separate cover that includes a copy of the written survey instrument utilized to gather data, with response rates, and a compendium of suggestions and barriers received by survey respondents and interviewees.

SUMMARY, ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Introduction

This report outlines the findings and recommendations of a formative review of the State of Oregon's Sustainability Initiative. In May 2000 Governor Kitzhaber signed an Executive Order No. EO-00-07 directing the State of Oregon to develop policies and programs that will assist Oregon in meeting a goal of sustainability within one generation – by 2025. In 2001 the Oregon Legislature adopted House Bill 3948, making sustainability part of state law. For simplification purposes only, in this review we refer to the combination of the Governor's EO and HB 3948 as the State of Oregon's “Sustainability Initiative.”

The review was undertaken to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the process of institutionalizing sustainability into everyday agency operations and identify actions that could enhance the success of the Initiative over time. The review was also undertaken as a learning experience for University of Oregon graduate students Ben Farrell, Melanie Mintz, and Adam Zimmerman, who did the majority of the planning, research, and writing. Bob Doppelt, Director of the Center for Watershed and Community Health, and Dr. John Baldwin, University of Oregon Associate Professor of Planning, Public Policy and Management, supervised the project.

II. Review Process

The assessment approach was framed around the assumption that the State of Oregon has made a commitment to sustainable policies and practices. Based on this assumption, rather than simply evaluating the success or failure of specific policies or actions, this review sought to determine the strengths as well as the limitations of the *process* being used to adopt sustainability in everyday government operations.

We made this assumption based on the Governor's Executive Order (EO), which states:

“The State of Oregon shall develop and promote policies and programs that will assist Oregon to meet a goal of sustainability within one generation—by 2025.”³

The initial focus of the EO was for the State of Oregon to “focus on improving its internal operations as state government’s first step toward meeting the goal of sustainability.”⁴ Sustainability is defined in the EO as “using, developing and protecting resources at a rate and in a manner that enables people to meet their current needs and also provides that future generations can meet their own needs. Sustainability requires simultaneously meeting environmental, economic and community needs.”⁵

³ Governor Kitzhaber Executive Order E0-00-07

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

The Oregon Legislature made the adoption of sustainability measures in state operations part of state law by passing House Bill 3948 in the 2001 legislative session. The Act declared a set of goals for the State as a whole and outlined how sustainability could be achieved both in internal operations and by supporting local communities. The Act included specific language and goals, such as, “Investments in facilities, equipment and durable goods should reflect the highest feasible efficiency and lowest life cycle costs”⁶ and “Investments and expenditures should help promote improvements in the efficient use of energy, water and resources.”⁷ The Act also created a Sustainability Board within DAS to perform various functions related to promoting sustainability within state government.

This review is not a report card grading the efforts of the State’s efforts or any state agency. The Initiative is too young for this type of review to be helpful. It may be years before decisions made today yield measurable changes in environmental, social, and economic conditions. Instead, the assessment was designed as an early *formative review*. The intent is to show whether the process used to implement the Initiative has been designed in ways that are likely to lead to success. An early formative review provides information that the Governor, agency directors, staff, legislators, and stakeholders can use to make adjustments and, when early results are promising, to expand their efforts beyond the start-up stage. A formative review can also identify and suggest potential adjustments to existing sustainability planning and decision-making processes that may help the State pursue its goals more effectively.

Framework for Analysis

For purpose of analysis, we utilized a framework that allowed us to group the results of our review by nine categories. The categories represent the key steps or phases of the process that other leading public and private organizations have used to integrate sustainability into their operations. The elements have been identified through the Center for Watershed and Community Health’s research on sustainability-change processes and are consistent with numerous books and research reports on organizational change.⁸

While the process of incorporating sustainability into an organization is by no means linear, the elements form a natural progression. Each phase provides a foundation for the next, and the process is circular. Organizations can start their efforts at any step. Experience shows, however, that unless they circle back through phases that may have not been fully addressed, the change initiative may be at risk. For example, in order to show progress, tactical steps may be the initial point of engagement for many agencies (e.g. specific waste reduction or energy efficiency projects). However, unless the agency

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ See, for example: *Leading Change Toward Sustainability: A Field Guide for Senior Managers, Elected Officials, Civic Leaders, and Other Change Agents*, B. Doppelt (In Press, Greenleaf Publishing U.K.); *Leading Change* by J. Kotter; *The Challenge of Organizational Change*, by R.M. Kanter, B. Stein, and T. Jick; *Breaking The Code of Change*, by M. Beer and N Nohria; *Catalytic Leadership: Strategies for an Interconnected World*, by J. Luke; *Creating High Performance Government Organizations*, by M. Popovich, Editor.

spends time clarifying its sustainability vision, goals, and strategies, they may quickly find that the initial projects do not quite fit the overall intent, or may even be in conflict with the ultimate purpose of the effort.

Because research shows that the steps provide a sequential foundation for efforts to adopt sustainability measures, this review sought to determine the extent to which state employees and key stakeholders believe they have been sufficiently addressed. The steps include:

1. **Providing Consistent Sound Leadership To Achieve Sustainability.**

Effective leadership is required for the successful adoption of sustainability measures. Good leadership requires that leaders model desirable behaviors, hold themselves and their organizations accountable, and continually provide support and encouragement for advancement towards the desired goals of sustainability.

2. **Making A Compelling Case For Incorporating Sustainability Measures In State Government Operations.**

Because state employees have many tasks on their plates, for any new initiative to succeed, leadership throughout state government should make a clear and compelling case that sustainability is a priority and requires the attention and time of senior managers and staff. The case for change usually includes an inspiring broad-based vision of a desired new direction and outcomes and reasons why this path is more desirable than the current one.

3. **Organizing Broad-Based Guiding Teams To Plan And Lead The Initiative.**

Because the social, economic, and environmental issues involved with sustainability are often managed by separate agencies, and because sustainability measures cut across so many issues and functions, no single individual, unit, or department on their own— not a governor or agency director—can transform an agency into a more sustainable enterprise. Similarly, no single person such as a sustainability coordinator or special unit can unilaterally perform all the functions required to set an organization on a path toward sustainability. Cross-functional guiding coalitions or transition teams should be organized and empowered to plan, lead, and sustain the initiatives at all levels of government.

4. **Developing A Clear Vision Of Sustainability For Government Operations.**

The transition teams should translate the broad vision provided by the Governor, legislature, and other senior leaders into visions that are specifically tailored to their individual agencies and units. It is difficult, if not impossible, to instill sustainability measures in an organization without a clearly expressed vision of what is to be achieved. If employees do not have a solid understanding of the goals and rationale behind the sustainability effort, confusion is certain to follow. Vision describes intent. A clear vision elucidates the Initiatives overall purpose and reflects the aspirations of its leaders and members. Vision sets a target towards which a sequenced set of strategies and tactics can be employed by people all levels of government.

5. **Adopting Operational and “People-Change” Strategies To Achieve The Vision.**
Once a clear vision of sustainability is established at the agency and unit levels, operational and “people-change” strategies can be developed to achieve it. *Strategy* concerns the large-scale marshalling of forces and allocation of resources. It refers to the way an organization will accomplish its work—the overall framework within which the organization will make decisions in pursuit of its vision of sustainability. Operational strategies focus on technologies, management practices, and policies. “People-change” strategies focus ways to increase knowledge and understanding and to adjust thinking and perspectives. Once teams settle upon their strategic approaches, tactical planning can begin. *Tactics* are the specific, local, immediate, and usually short-term actions the organization takes to implement the strategy.
6. **Relentlessly Communicating The Vision And Strategies.**
Constant communication is required for the members of an organization to develop a common understanding of the need, vision, and strategies of any new initiative. Communication should be relentless, utilize multiple channels, and be interactive (not one way). Educational and training programs may be some of the tactics used to implement a communication strategy.
7. **Rewarding Learning and Innovation To Achieve Stair-Stepped Successes.**
Once strategies have been developed and implementation begins, explicit steps should be taken to foster continual learning and innovation and produce a succession of short-term victories. Continual learning expands the knowledge base of employees and improves decision-making. A series of increasingly larger successes helps to clarify what the Initiative seeks to achieve and demonstrates that success is possible. Rewarding employees who propose new ideas helps to reinforce creativity, energizes employees, and provides a clear sign that the organization supports participation in the sustainability effort.
8. **Explicitly Removing Systems And Structural Barriers That Stand In The Way Of Success.**
Because the shift towards sustainability inevitably requires overcoming technical, management, financial, and other obstacles, people from all levels of an organization should be empowered to identify and overcome key obstacles to achieving the vision of sustainability. The learning and innovation described in phase seven above may prove critical to overcoming barriers such as the lack of financial resources.
9. **Systematically Driving Sustainability Into The Policies, Procedures, and Culture of State Government.**
Sustainability is a new way of thinking, problem solving, and operating. For this new way of thinking to stick over the long term, it must eventually become embedded in the policies, procedures, and culture of state government. After a sufficient amount of time has been spent in learning what the new approach involves, thinking and behaviors consistent with sustainability must be formally encouraged and rewarded within government and those inconsistent with this should be consistently discouraged.

Analysis Sample

The review process included written surveys mailed to a selected sample of 308 state employees that represented 21 agencies. 101 surveys were returned, representing a return rate of 32.8%. 24 phone interviews were also conducted with current and former staff from the governor's office, agency directors, senior managers, line staff, and key external stakeholders. Our analysis is based on a combination of the data and comments received during our interviews. Data from the written surveys and notes from the anonymous interviews are available upon request from the Center for Watershed and Community Health.

III. Findings

A. Overall Findings

The majority of people who mailed their surveys back to us and the majority of those we interviewed by phone said that the Initiative got off to a good start, that a number of positive steps have been taken and outcomes achieved, and that significant potential exists to achieve even more in the future that would benefit state government and the public. If some of the additional steps can be taken that research has shown are important for making progress toward sustainable development, state government may be poised to achieve greater success. More specifically, successes have included the following:

- In general, people feel that the Initiative got off to a good start. Through his EO and initial follow-up steps, respondents believe that the Governor and his staff made a solid case for adopting sustainable practices. About two-thirds of respondents indicated that the Governor's Office initially made a compelling case for the adoption of sustainability measures.
- Through both the survey responses and our interviews it became evident that state employees have a fair understanding of the vision of the Initiative. This is an important finding, as it is very difficult to instill understanding of a proposed new initiative in an entity the size of state government.
- As a result of the above, a number of positive outcomes have occurred. For example:
 - Over half of the responses indicated that their agency had reduced their resource use via recycling, energy conservation, better building and facilities management decisions, and purchasing policies.
 - The Initiative has given those interested in sustainability within state government a platform from which to work and enhanced the ability of people within and external to government to openly discuss the issues.
 - Several agencies have initiated innovative solutions to achieving sustainability. For example,

- The Department of Corrections (DoC) diverted used waste denim that was going to landfills to a non-profit charity that is using the material to make “Ecofiber” dog beds and other products. This saved the agency waste management tipping fees and generated jobs at the charity. DoC has also partnered with the Oregon Food Bank, Eastern Oregon farmers, and local governments to help surplus food reach hungry families.
- The Employment Appeals Board revisited its paper practices and moved beyond recycling and utilizing double-sided copies by publishing and delivering all of its reports and decisions on electronic discs, thereby reducing paper use by approximately 90%.⁹
- The Department of Housing and Community Services initiated a Green Building Project which has included providing green building training to affordable housing developers, publishing information on environmentally sensitive buildings practices, and reserving a portion of its Residential Loan Program funds to help low-income, first-time homebuyers purchase energy efficient homes.¹⁰
- Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) and the Department of Environmental Quality moved into downtown Baker City fulfilling the Initiative’s goals of revitalizing rural areas and helping to maintain vital and active downtown areas.¹¹ OPRD has also initiated turning Tumalo State Park into a net power provider through the use of solar energy production.

Although many positive outcomes have been achieved, our research found that continued progress will require that a number of challenges be addressed. For example:

- Although the initial push from the Governor’s office was good, respondents feel that follow through was inadequate and there is a lack of clarity on how agencies and employees should proceed. Whereas most respondents¹² were able to provide reasonable descriptions of the vision, purpose, and goals of the Initiative, only slightly more than half felt the Initiative includes a *clear* vision, purpose, goals, and targets.
- Few mechanisms (such as agency specific leadership teams) have been provided within individual agencies or specific units/programs to guide overall implementation of the Initiative.

⁹ Oregon Solutions Governor’s Sustainability Awards website www.oregonsolutions.net , 10/7/02

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

¹² In general, when referring to “respondents”, we are referring to the 73% of survey respondents who indicated they were either very or somewhat familiar with the Sustainability Initiative as only they completed specific questions about the Initiative. Only when discussing suggestions are responses of those unfamiliar with the Initiative included as both those familiar and unfamiliar with the Initiative were asked to provide suggestions.

- Due to the lack of guiding leadership teams, many agencies have not adopted clear visions and goals for pursuing sustainability specifically tailored to their mission and work.
- In large part because the vision and goals have not been clarified, strategies have not been developed within most agencies. Only a third of the respondents said their agency had developed a strategic plan to guide in the implementation of the Initiative.
- In the absence of sound strategies, the focus has remained primarily on tactical steps (e.g. waste or energy projects). Tactics are “thin” agreements that provide the least leverage for change. It is not surprising, therefore, that only roughly fifty percent of respondents said they clearly understood their role in helping their organization achieve the goals of the Initiative.
- The need, vision, goals, and strategies of the Initiative have not been sufficiently communicated. For example, less than one quarter of the respondents indicated that the Initiative was discussed regularly at staff meetings.
- A lack of mechanisms exists to support employee learning, involvement and innovation. For example, less than one third of the respondents said they were asked for their ideas on how to pursue the goals of the Initiative. This suggests that employees are not actively involved in decision-making regarding sustainability, a practice that is certain to reduce learning opportunities.
- Insufficient steps have been taken to imbed sustainability into agency policies, operations, and culture.
- Leadership appears to be inconsistent. The Governor’s office provided leadership in the initial stages but has not continued to do so. Some agency directors seem to provide consistent direction and require accountability while others do not.

B. Specific Findings

The written survey was structured to ask respondents, before they answered any other questions, if they were familiar with the Initiative. Those who were *unfamiliar* with the Initiative were asked to skip to a section that asked for suggestions as to how government entities could better incorporate sustainability measures into State policies, programs, and practices. Their suggestions and the suggestions of those who were familiar with the Initiative are discussed in the appendices of this report.

Respondents that were *very familiar* or *somewhat familiar* with the Initiative were asked to complete the entire survey. 73% of respondents indicated they were either “very familiar” or “somewhat familiar” with the Initiative. Although those who returned the surveys are probably a self-selected group, the fact that almost three-quarters of the respondents were at least somewhat familiar with the Initiative suggests that communication was initially positive.

In this section, we summarize the results derived from those who returned the written surveys (called “respondents”) who indicated they were either “very” or “somewhat familiar” with the Initiative as well as information provided by those who were interviewed by phone.

1. Providing Consistent and Effective Leadership.

It was noted by many respondents that leadership provided for the Initiative was initially good but has dropped off substantially. Although some respondents said that their agency directors were providing good leadership, on the whole it appears as though people feel that leadership is lacking. Effective leaders walk the talk and hold themselves and their organizations accountable for achieving to the same high standards.

2. Making A Compelling Case for the Adoption of Sustainability Measures.

Survey results and interviews found that respondents felt that the Governor and his staff initially made a good case for the adoption of sustainability measures. At the agency and unit level, however, it appears that the case was made less strongly. Few people felt that the Legislature had made a compelling case. While a majority of survey respondents felt that the initial case for change was good, in our interviews many respondents indicated that information and direction about the Initiative has slowed or stopped altogether.

- 67.6% of respondents indicated that the Governor had made a clear and compelling case for the adoption of the Initiative
- 52.9% of respondents indicated that their Agency Director had made a clear and compelling case for the adoption of the Initiative
- 20% responded that the Legislature had made a clear and compelling case for the adoption of the Initiative

One method we utilized to test whether a compelling case had been made was to ask survey respondents to summarize their understanding of the vision, purpose and goals of the Initiative. According to our review of their written comments, the breadth and depth of the Initiative is fairly well understood. In their own words a majority of respondents described the Initiative as a step towards meeting the State of Oregon’s current needs and future needs through the development of programs and practices that are environmentally, culturally, and economically sustainable. Many respondents also indicated they understood the role of state government as an initiator and model for other sectors. As will be discussed further on in this report, visions specific to each agency and unit seem to have been less clearly delineated.

In phone interviews with both high level agency executives and external stakeholders who had been involved in the Initiative, the dominant perspective was that although a compelling case had initially been made, it was most effective with those who were already informed or interested in moving towards sustainability. In the words of a former state employee involved with the Initiative, the EO “inspired people within state government, especially those already interested in the topic. People have used the

Executive Order to re-energize their efforts." An employee with a natural resource agency said, "The governor making a case was helpful and the definition was consistent with our efforts. It mostly served as an endorsement of where we were at."

Several phone interviewees also felt that the EO provided a common platform from which to embark on a path towards sustainability. One external stakeholder who has been very involved with the Initiative noted that it has helped sustainability become, symbolically, a "part of the political lexicon" and that it is now a "concept many interests can talk to." A high-level social service agency employee commented that "The Executive Order did lend strength to promoting sustainability. It was useful to me, as it provided a document we can all refer to."

Several interviewees noted, however, that although the Governor's office did a good job of developing an initial compelling case, it did not provide sufficient direction on how agencies should proceed. In the words of one external observer, the Initiative has been "somewhat helpful...but we need greater guidance at the specific decision-making levels. How does it influence specific programs? The definition needs meat. Agencies should be continually asking if specific programs are moving towards, away from sustainability, or are having a neutral effect." Several interviewees referred to training sessions and brown bag lunches at which agencies, departments, and people from the private sector shared successes and information about sustainability. These discontinued sessions were considered helpful and several interviewees said they hoped they would begin again.

3. Organizing Broad-Based Guiding Teams.

According to respondents, it does not appear that many guiding teams have been organized within state agencies to develop and oversee implementation of the Initiative.

- 32.3% of respondents indicated that an effective team had been engaged to develop a strategy and oversee implementation of the Initiative.
- 36.9% of respondents indicated that an effective team had NOT been engaged to develop a strategy and oversee implementation of the Initiative.
- 30.8% of respondents indicated that they did not know if an effective team had been engaged, indicating that if such a team exists, it was not very visible.

Interviews with agency employees and external stakeholders reinforced the view that effective teams had not been organized. Although a few agencies noted that they had assigned the role of sustainability coordinator or liaison to someone, several interviewees noted that from the governor's office to the agencies the responsibility of shepherding the goals of sustainability needed to the responsibility of some entity or person or it would lose momentum. Several interviewees recommended that the next governor retain a sustainability coordinator. In the words of one government employee, the next governor should, "have a coordinator or advisor or at least a resource person to keep sustainability a topic. It could even be someone in one of the agencies. Someone needs to be there to think out of the box and expand the policy options to address sustainability." Some

interviewees noted that the responsibility of sustainability coordinator had been discussed and already dropped.

4. Developing a Clear and Inspiring Vision of Sustainability.

It appears that the broad based vision delineated by the Governor and state legislature has not been successfully translated by each agency and unit/program into a vision applicable to their mission and tasks. Part of this problem is undoubtedly due to the lack of effective guiding teams that would have the responsibility for further translating the broad based vision into agency specific intents and goals.

- 52.2% of respondents indicated that the Initiative includes a clear vision, purpose, goals and targets; 21.7% indicated that it does not; 26.1% indicated that they did not know whether it did or not.
- 55.7% of respondents indicated that they clearly understand their role in helping their organization achieve the goals of the Initiative; 40% indicated that they did not; 4.3% indicated that they did not know whether they did or not.
- Lack of clarity was the most common response category when respondents were asked to list the limitations that they believe impede the progress of Initiative in their organization.

The phone interviews reinforced the information obtained from the written surveys. Several interviewees noted that although sustainability was very important to the current governor, the vision had not sufficiently been interpreted at each level of state government. In the words of one agency director, “the Sustainability Initiative is very close to the governor’s heart” but that the vision has “lost its power as it has moved through the bureaucracy.” On the other hand, several interviewees noted that although the Initiative might leave with this governor, sustainability was a trend that would likely continue. One agency director said that “Hundreds of Executive Orders are issued and they only have a shelf life as long as the governor who issued them. Agencies can implement sustainability practices without the Executive Order.” Another interviewee, a member of an independent state planning and oversight agency, lamented that the initial vision is “too broad, it’s everything to everyone.”

5. Adopting Operational and People-Change Strategies to Achieve the Vision.

Only one third of the respondents said that strategies had been developed to achieve the vision and goals of the Initiative within their agency and two thirds of these people were from three agencies. Again, part of this problem is undoubtedly due to the lack of lead teams and the lack of agency/program specific visions. Although the Oregon Progress Board is currently involved with a major effort to better incorporate benchmarks in agency operations, less than half of the respondents said that their agency is structuring its policies and programs to achieve the environmental, social, or economic benchmarks established by the Progress Board (this may be due to the fact that the Progress Board’s recent efforts are not widely known yet).

Notably, our research also found that less than a third of the respondents said they had been asked for their ideas about how to adopt sustainability measures and it appears that many feel uninvolved with the Initiative. We were surprised by the number of suggestions we received from respondents about steps that can be taken to achieve the vision (see the Appendix for a summary of suggestions). Most of the suggestions relate to how government could better incorporate sustainability measures into its policies, programs, and practices.

- 32.9% of respondents indicated that their agency has developed or is developing a “strategic plan to guide in the implementation” of the Initiative; 32.9% indicated that they had not; and 34.3% did not know if such a plan were developed.
- 47% of respondents indicated that their agency is structuring its policies and programs to achieve the Progress Board’s benchmarks. Nearly 13% percent indicated that their agency is not structuring its programs around the benchmarks and 40% did not know.
- Sufficient resources are one component of a successful strategy. Only 15.5% of respondents indicated that they received adequate funding resources to implement activities related to the Initiative; 27.8% indicated that they received adequate technical resources; 18.6% indicated that they received adequate training and educational resources.
- Although nearly all respondents offered suggestions as to how various entities could better implement the Initiative, only 31.9% of respondents had been asked about their ideas on how to best achieve the goals of the Initiative.

Interviewee responses to questions about strategy were far ranging. Most agency personnel indicated that while the concept of sustainability had begun to influence such decisions as purchasing, an overall strategy was missing. One high-level agency employee noted that s/he was “Not aware of an overall strategy for working towards sustainability; maybe it is occurring division by division. My role is to say ‘go be sustainable’; it is somebody else’s role to figure out how. There is no reporting back to the top... although maybe this happens at some sublevels.” An exception to this is taking place in one natural resource agency where “sustainability is being used as the guiding focal theme” in strategic planning. Especially in non-natural resource/environmental agencies there appears to be the sentiment that sustainability is still seen as secondary to their primary mission, especially in terms of how they as an agency are recognized and rewarded. One interviewee from a social service/economic development agency described their strategic planning process in which they wanted to make their top goals relevant to employees; sustainability did not rank among the top goals.

6. Relentlessly Communicating The Vision And Strategies.

Our research found that while it appears that initial communication about the Initiative was good, ongoing communication has been weak. Furthermore, several written responses and interviewees said that direction and information about the Initiative seemed to have disappeared after initial announcements. Whereas a large majority of respondents had received information about the Initiative via at least one source, less than

a quarter of respondents indicated that the Initiative was regularly discussed. The most obvious gap seems to have occurred between the articulation of the broad-based vision by the Governor and Legislature and the lack of follow-through and re-interpretation of the vision at the Agency level.

- A large majority of respondents have received information about the Initiative at some point: 58% via meetings; 70.1% via e-mail; 60.6% via publications; and 71.4% via word-of-mouth.
- Only 23.9% indicated that the Initiative is regularly discussed at staff meetings. (74.6% indicated that it was not; and 1.4% indicated that they did not know.)

Most phone interviewees said that communication has been fairly weak. One external stakeholder felt it was adequate. Several interviewees indicated that they had not heard about it since the initial brown bag lunches and initial meeting with the Governor's Office and natural resource agency directors. Within certain agencies and fields—natural resource management, green building—interviewees indicated that talk pertaining to sustainability has been driven by larger trends more than by the Initiative. One high level employee with an administrative agency recommended that the governor's office "tell stories to get the momentum moving."

7. Encourage Learning and Reward Innovation To Achieve Stair-Cased Successes.

No respondent clearly said they were encouraged or rewarded to find innovative solutions to the challenges of sustainability. While many respondents said that they knew of short-term successes produced by the Initiative, only a few said they had made a shift in the way they approached their work.

- Only 9.7% of respondents indicated that rewards are given when employees make progress in achieving the goals of the Initiative.
- No survey respondent included any comments alluding to innovation or rewards when asked to describe the highlights or successes of the Initiative.
- No agency employee interviewed indicated that there was a system of rewards for progress on the Initiative built into employee reviews.
- A few respondents said that people were hesitant to make change due to concerns about how the legislature would respond.

Several interviewees noted that the Governor's Sustainability Awards had been an effective start at promoting and rewarding making progress in the area of sustainability. The awards were a monthly acknowledgment given from the Governor to people and teams who were experimenting with new practices and ideas that promoted the EO. Awards were given from November 2000 to March 2001. Because few survey respondents indicated that rewards are given, it seems that the publicity of the Governor's Awards was minimal, and no awards have apparently been given since March 2001. While employees from some natural resource agencies felt that they are recognized for making progress on sustainability—although they did not state how or when this occurs—interviewees from other agencies stated that their rewards/recognition need to be

beyond the “intrinsic reward” of integrating sustainability into practices. One high level employee from a social service/economic development agency noted that they would likely make more progress if sustainability, “was important enough to the legislature and acknowledgements were given.”

8. Explicitly Removing Systems And Structural Barriers.

Our research suggests that few efforts have been taken to identify and remove barriers to success.

- Only 41.7% of respondents indicated that steps have been taken within their agency/department to identify and remove barriers.
- Lack of clarity, lack of funding, and lack of communication and training were the most common limitations and obstacles referred to when respondents were asked to list the limitations and obstacles that might impede the progress of the Initiative. See “Outstanding Limitations and Obstacles” in Section D below.

9. Systematically Driving Sustainability Into the Policies, Procedures, and Culture of State Government.

Cultural change is one of the last steps to be taken in any organizational change process, as it is largely a product of multiple years of testing and learning. The ultimate goal, however, of any change effort is to transform the normal way of doing business and make the new approach standard operating procedure. Although the written survey did not specifically ask about the organizational culture, several respondents indicated that “resistance to change” and “time for cultural change” were factors that slowed their agency’s progress. In contrast to the written survey, phone interviewees were asked to what degree they believed sustainability was becoming a part of their organization’s culture. Staff with several natural resource agencies said they believe that their employees could generally describe the concept of sustainability and how it fit into their work. These people felt the Initiative was familiar throughout. These agencies have completed some outreach to field offices.

The Department of Corrections is a non-natural resource agency that stands out for its efforts to integrate sustainability into decision-making. One high-level social service interviewee said they were, “Getting there...but it is not what we are rewarded for. It is important to individuals, and aspects are important, but there are so many things we need to work on.” Another high-level employee noted that the Initiative had taken hold “unevenly” and that while some see sustainability as a notion that will continue to gain importance others see it as just a “fad”, an impermanent policy-directive of the current administration. Many noted, both in the surveys and the interviews, that the cultural change that had occurred was largely due to factors and trends external to the Initiative.

C. Outstanding Successes

This section summarizes our findings of some of the most outstanding successes of the Initiative to date:

- 56.9% of responses indicated that their agency or department had reduced their use of natural resources via recycling, energy conservation, building and facilities decisions and purchasing decisions. Recycling and energy conservation were the top two actions taken.

- The next most recognized highlights and successes were in the areas of:
 - Leadership, raised awareness, and promotion to the public (19% of survey responses indicated these were successes).
 - Planning and policy-related successes (12.1% of responses said these were successes).
 - Saved financial resources (6.9% of responses said these were successes).

- There appears to be a strong awareness of how internal changes can save financial and environmental resources.

- The early DAS training and Governor’s Office “brown bag” lunches were seen as successful and worthy of continuation.

- The Initiative seems to have given those interested in sustainability a platform from which to work. As one external observer and citizen commission member noted, “The Executive Order gave me a tool to push for the inclusion (of sustainability); without it, it wouldn’t have happened.” Another external observer noted that while the Initiative has not provided a “silver bullet, the fact that it is on the books is good and it has kept the discussion rolling.”

- Several interviewees noted that new government buildings are being planned are “greener” as a result of the Initiative and would achieve long-term financial savings and serve as a model for the public.

- Changes in purchasing policies were mentioned many times as both a success and continuing challenge. Several interviewees and survey respondents noted that sustainability needed to be included as criteria for purchase so that cost comparisons would occur only after sustainability criteria were met.

- Only 7.3% of responses mentioned successes that involved long-term planning strategic planning, policy decisions, long-term planning and increased collaboration.

D. Important Limitations/Obstacles

Survey respondents provided a whole array of responses when asked to list the limitations, obstacles, and/or bottlenecks that they believe impede the progress of the Initiative in their organization. As stated in Section B above, only 41.7% of survey respondents indicated that steps had been taken within their agency/department to identify and remove barriers to achieving the goals of the Initiative. The barriers listed by respondents include:

- Lack of clarity about what should be done at the agency and department level was the most common obstacle referred to. (28.1% of responses.) In the words of one survey respondent, “The vision is not connected to our actions”, another wrote that there is a “lack of clarity in what we should do and a lack of knowledge that it is a priority”. Another survey respondent wrote that sustainability is not “something on the daily goals list of managers. It has not been operationalized to that level.” A high level interviewee noted that “the initial E.O. did not require enough time spent to help other agencies with understanding what sustainability means and how sustainability applies to individual agency missions... it would have been good to give agencies a ‘dousing of sustainability 101’.”
- Funding limitations was the second most common obstacle referred to with 21.9% of responses. One respondent wrote that the “greatest limitation is lack of additional resources and staff to emphasize sustainability further”. Several interviewees articulated the same sentiment. (The sixth most common response (6.3%) referred to the costs (or perceived costs) of implementing sustainability programs or projects.)
- Communication and training ranked third (18.8%) in terms of limitations and obstacles. One respondent wrote “more information or training would help all the employees to see what they can do and how their every day decision and practices could encourage OR defeat this program.” Another respondent wrote that the Initiative “has not achieved a high enough profile internally to have generated much discussion.”
- The fourth most common response (9.4%) referred to conflicts with other priorities, policies, or mandates.
- The fifth most common response referred to time (7.8%) for and/or resistance to cultural change.
- Several interviewees noted that General Fund agencies would have the hardest time implementing the Initiative due to political constraints.
- In interviews, lack of human resources was referred to often as a casualty of the funding limitations. One high level interviewee noted that funding for staff

positions to develop a strategy for implementing the Initiative is not available. A key outside observer noted that if the Initiative is “going to work, it needs to be someone’s responsibility.”

- A key shortcoming, according to a high level external observer, is that one of the potentially important implementing components, the Sustainability Board, may sunset before it is even fully operationalized.
- Several interviewees said that the state declared victory too early, after the “low hanging fruit” had been harvested, resulting in an early demise of the urgency to maintain the impetus behind the Initiative.

IV. Analysis and Recommendations

The findings lead us to conclude that while a number of achievements have resulted so far, continued and expanded progress will depend on the construction of a pathway that addresses the missing links of the sustainability-change process. Achieving sustainability within one generation will require concerted ongoing effort. Key recommendations that emerged as a result of our findings include:

1. Provide Effective Leadership.

Despite the fact that an Executive Order and state law require the pursuit of sustainability measures, for progress to continue sound leadership will be needed. One of the most important underlying themes we learned from the written surveys and phone interviews is that while leadership was initially good, it is lacking within the Governor's office and many state agencies today. Part of the problem undoubtedly relates to the impending change of administrations and the budget crisis that has diverted attention. Yet, many respondents said that the Initiative holds significant potential to save the state money and to generate other benefits. Achieving these outcomes will require continual committed leadership. Effective leadership promotes a dialogue that creates change. Good leadership keeps everyone focused on the big picture and inspires people to overcome the many obstacles they will encounter on their journey toward sustainability. If Oregon is to achieve success in its effort to adopt sustainability measures, sound leadership will need to be provided at all levels of government.

Recommendation: The Governor, as the CEO of state government, must take the lead by continually and visibly underscoring the importance of adopting sustainability measures. The goal of achieving sustainability should be linked to current events (e.g. saving money to ameliorate the budget crises) to make it increasingly relevant for state employees. Requiring that state agencies adopt clear measurable benchmarks and targets for achieving sustainability and to regularly report on their progress in achieving these goals would be an important step to demonstrate commitment and leadership. The Dutch government and the City of Santa Monica, California, two of the leading public agency sustainability efforts, have found the adoption of clear goals and targets to be extremely helpful to focus efforts and achieve results that both internal staff and the public at large can be proud of. If the Initiative is to succeed, Agency directors will also need to provide effective leadership. State employees should continually and clearly hear from their superiors that achieving sustainability is a top priority. Agency directors should address the issues outlined in this report (e.g. such as forming transition teams) and require that staff adopt clear, measurable benchmarks and targets and regularly report on progress in achieving them. The recent work of the Oregon Progress Board along these lines is consistent with this recommendation. However, successful adoption of benchmarks and targets will require consistent leadership from the Governor and agency directors. Symbolic acts should be used to demonstrate commitment to the Initiative. State leaders should also “walk the talk” and lead by example.

2. Form Teams to Plan and Lead the Initiative.

Because so many respondents felt that leadership is now lacking and that few strategies had been developed, it may prove very helpful to organize transition (guiding or leadership) teams within each agency, unit, or program. The creation of cross-functional teams can send a strong signal to employees that the issue at hand is important, focus attention on problem solving, and provide a way to connect sustainability activities throughout an organization. Broad based involvement is the only way to generate understanding, commitment, and effective problem solving. Although in the short run the formation of teams may seem to add extra work to already busy workloads, the integration and synergy that may occur as a result of unified and coordinated efforts to achieve sustainability may reduce workloads and lead to cost savings in the mid- to long-run. The absence of such teams is a key missing link in developing and employing effective strategies.

Recommendation: Teams should be developed and empowered within each agency, unit and/or program to plan, lead, and sustain efforts to adopt sustainability measures. The teams should assure that the vision is sufficiently translated to the mission and tasks of their agency or unit, to craft strategies, and continually communicate about the Initiative.

3. Clarify What Is To Be Achieved At Each Level of State Government.

Many respondents said they did not understand how to apply the broad-based vision developed by Governor Kitzhaber and the legislature to their daily activities. The visions provided by the Governor and the legislature are of necessity broad based. It is not uncommon for senior executives to provide a “global” vision which individual departments or units find too universal to be helpful in guiding their daily activities. For this reason, the transition teams must take the time to translate the broad vision into one applicable to the mission and work of their agency or unit. Research shows that the best way to develop a vision is to first ask what the *ideal* condition of sustainability would be (for a specific service provided, project, product, or the department as a whole), and then to move backwards to ask what the *closest immediate approximation* to the ideal is. Achieving the closest approximation to the ideal condition should be the first focus. A plan can then be made to close the gap between the ideal and its closest approximation.

Recommendation: Teams of some type should be formed within each agency or department. The teams tailor the broad based vision provided by the Governor and legislature to their agency’s mission and tasks. Research shows that good visions:

- Describe the ideal organization and its activities as they will be in the future (e.g. 3, 10, 25 years).
- Appeal to the long-term interests of employees, stakeholders, citizens and others who have a stake in the organization.
- Are clear enough to provide guidance for decision-making.
- Are clear enough to motive action but flexible enough to allow for individual initiative.
- Are easy to communicate.

4. Design Operational and “People-Change” Strategies.

The lack of strategies to achieve sustainability was one of the most common concerns voiced by respondents. A lack of clarity on the overall approach leaves people unsure about what decisions to make and steps to take to achieve the goals of the Initiative. Once the transition teams have clarified their intent (vision), they should craft two types of strategies: one focused on achieving the operational and policy changes needed to achieve the vision, and another focused on helping state employees understand and adopt sustainability-based thinking, perspectives, and behaviors. The former is not likely to succeed over the long term unless the latter—a people change strategy—has been effectively developed and executed.

Recommendation: Each agency should develop operational and people-change strategies for integrating sustainability into their work. The strategies should be integrated with the agency’s daily work so that everyday and long-term thinking and decisions are consistent with the overall vision of sustainability. Having a clear vision in place is an essential component of developing an effective comprehensive strategy. Effective strategies should include goals and measurable targets to which departments can orient their work. Meeting interim targets may help build momentum and provide encouragement that success is possible.

5. Build a Common Understanding of the Sustainability Vision and Strategies.

Another common theme we heard in the review was that there is a lack of education and communication about sustainability. Once transition teams have developed the strategies, efforts should be made to relentlessly communicate them and the vision and goals to agency employees, stakeholders, and others. The power of good visions and strategies can be enhanced only if people have a good understanding of them. Developing this understanding requires constant education and communication. Education and training programs of many types should be part of this focus.

Recommendation: From the Governor’s office to each agency, department, and unit, education and communication strategies should be developed. Some elements of effective communication include:

- Keeping it Simple: The information should be easy to get and understand.
- Use of multiple forums: Staff meetings, memos, performance reviews etc.
- Repetition: Repeat it again and again.
- Use of Two-Way Communication: engaging in discussion (don’t lecture), soliciting ideas and involving people in problem solving.

6. Solicit Employee Ideas and Support Learning and Creative Problem-Solving.

Less than one third of respondents said they had been asked for their ideas about how to pursue sustainability. This suggests that employees do not feel involved with decision-making. Survey respondents also identified numerous barriers to continued progress. These two issues may provide the seeds of success. If state employees can be actively encouraged to propose and test ideas of new ways to achieve sustainability, they may identify ways to overcome many of the obstacles. For example, based on the suggestions we received from the written surveys, agency staff may have ideas for improving

efficiency and reducing costs, for partnering with the private sector, academia, or non-profits to achieve key goals and provide low cost or free educational and training opportunities. Encouraging and rewarding innovation aimed at identifying these ideas may help the state to over key barriers. This process may also unleash the creativity of the State workforce and generate innovations and success that currently seem impossible. Efforts today may yield results that reduce costs and workloads in the not so distant future.

Recommendation: At the agency and unit levels, employees should be encouraged to continually learn and rewarded for proposing new ideas and participating in their testing and execution. Such recognition would reinforce desirable behaviors, energize employees, and provide a clear sign that the agency supports the Initiative and those who actively participate in it. The Governor's Office and the Legislature could also showcase successes. This would serve as a communication and educational tool, and provide encouragement and a moral-boost to those who participate.

7. Initiate Steps to Embed Sustainability Into Government Operations and Culture.

Although it usually takes three to four years for the most effective type of thinking and behaving to emerge in any major organizational change initiative, it is not too early for state agencies to begin to embed sustainability into their policies, procedures, and culture. The process of embedding sustainability means that all of the key factors that influence performance send the same messages. This means that the leadership, vision, goals, strategies, tactics, communications, rewards, compensation, hiring, promotion, accounting, decision-making, information, and employee involvement mechanisms of state government send consistent and mutually reinforcing signals to employees and stakeholders such that it is impossible to think or behave in unsustainable ways. Even when every other aspect of a change process has been done well, when different aspects of an organization are misaligned, the sustainability train can run off the track. When the key factors are in synch, sustainability can endure and grow over the long-term.

Recommendations: The Governor's Office should take the lead in the process of embedding sustainability in government operations by asking each agency director to demonstrate how they will incorporate the issues into their standard operations and culture. In turn, agency directors can take steps such as including performance on sustainability in employee job evaluations, promotional decisions, bonuses, and other reward systems. Agencies can also review their policies and procedures to determine the extent to which they encouraging unsustainable behavior and take steps to amend them to foster sustainability-based thinking and actions. Because it takes many years to institutionalize a new approach, it may be in the State's best interest to start the process now.

Note: An appendix is contained under a separate cover that includes a copy of the survey instrument utilized to gather data, with response rates, and a compendium of the suggestions and barriers received by survey respondents and interviewees.