

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Report Name: Uniform Environmental Enforcement Act Report

Year: 2025

Date reported: 02/09/2025

Authorizing statute: 10 V.S.A. §8017

Committees: President Pro Tempore of the Senate, Speaker of the House, House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife, & Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy

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Executive Summary

The Enforcement Section (ENF) of the Environmental Compliance Division (ECD) in the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is the investigative body of DEC. The primary duty of the Enforcement Section is to investigate and document any/all alleged violations of Vermont's environmental permits, rules, regulations, and statutes that are under the jurisdiction of DEC. ECD's Enforcement Section is staffed by a Chief Environmental Enforcement Officer (CEEEO), and an Administrative Services Coordinator and five (5) Environmental Enforcement Officers (EEOs) located within geographical districts throughout the state. In addition, the ENF section has been carrying three vacancies due to retirements and are actively working to fill the positions and plan to be fully re-staffed by the summer of 2026.

In 2025, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) within the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) received a total of 2,732 incidents. 1,951 incidents were received by ENF, and 781 were initiated or received by DEC programs with 682 of those being reported spills. It should be noted that in January 2025, the ENF section modified the complaint tracking method, which creates an appearance of a decrease of alleged violations. Prior to 2025, every complaint received was tracked as an independent complaint, even if multiple parties made a complaint about the same event. It is believed that tracking individual events like complaints will allow for more meaningful data analysis in the future.

In 2025, ECD closed 1,978 incidents. Of these, 1,337 or around 67% were closed with no violation being found. Of the 641 incidents with a violation found, about 73% were closed with voluntary compliance being achieved. This highlights the benefit of ECD's EEOs investigating incidents to determine if a violation exists and the positive outcomes EEOs generate during face-to-face

communications with citizens to remedy violations. DEC also used formal enforcement methods including the issuance of 13 citations in 2025. These citations resulted in \$18,750.00 in penalties assessed and paid for the year to be directed to the general fund.

ANR's Enforcement and Litigation Section is housed within ANR's Office of General Counsel (OGC). The legal staff in this section handle formal enforcement that begins when an investigation ends and includes brokering settlement agreements and representing ANR in court proceedings related to formal enforcement actions. ECD and OGC work closely to bring cases identified by EEOs or DEC media program staff to legal resolution.

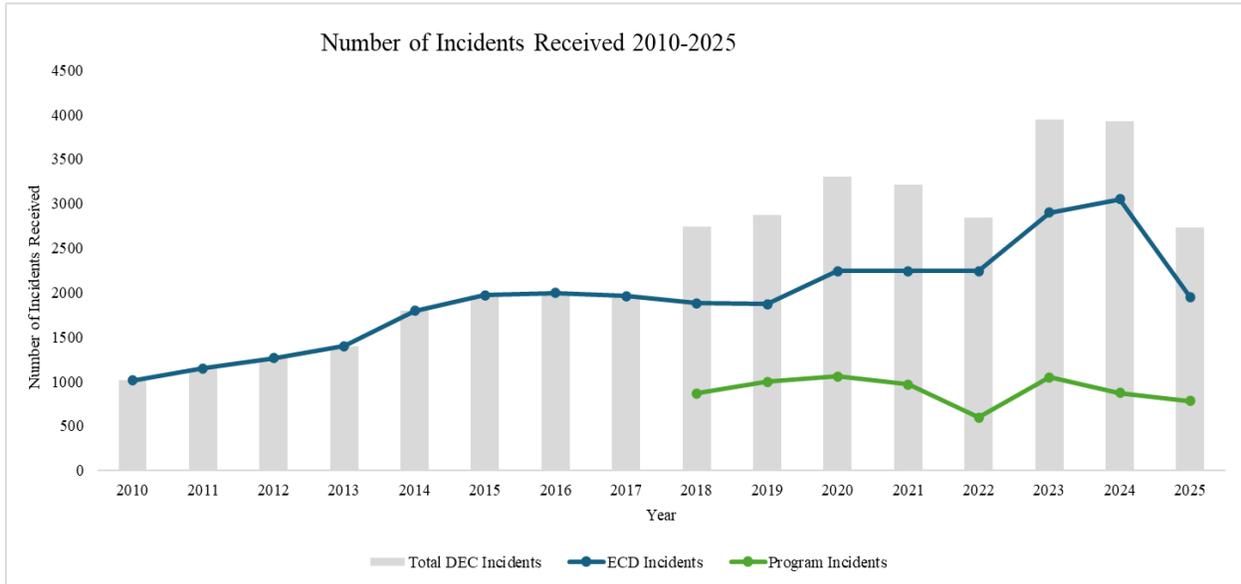
In 2025, ANR used formal enforcement methods in 22 cases through the issuance of Administrative Orders and Assurances of Discontinuances. The cases resulted in \$165,778 in penalties assessed for the year to be directed to the general fund.

Collaboration with the Attorney General's Office (AGO)

ANR continues to work closely and effectively with the AGO, meeting with them quarterly. ANR provides information on new cases to the AGO on a weekly basis. The MOU between the two organizations is reviewed annually to ensure its continued effectiveness.

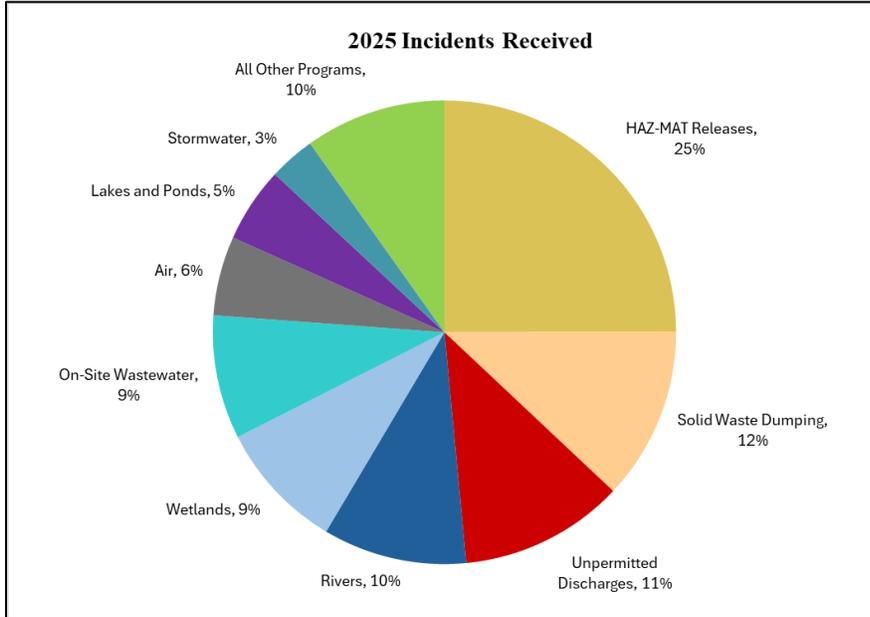
During 2025, ANR referred 3 enforcement cases to the AGO. One (1) ANR-referred case was closed by the AGO during the year.

Key Takeaways



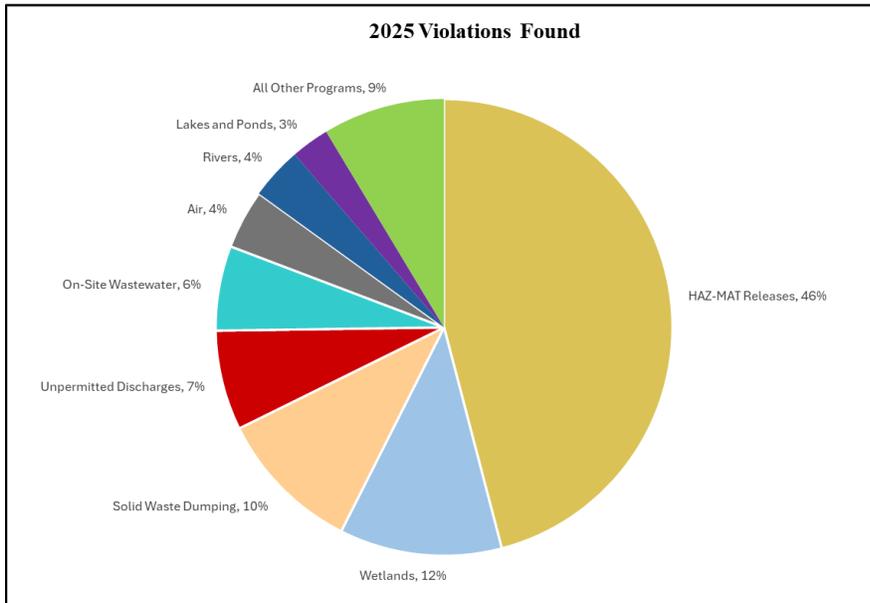
Incidents Received by Year. ECD data is presented since 2010. Note: Although the tracking breakout of ECD and program incidents began in 2018, incidents involving ECD and individual programs occurred prior to 2018.

In 2025, the most common categories of incidents received are presented in the figure below.



Program	Total	Percent
HAZ-MAT Releases	682	25%
Solid Waste Dumping	329	12%
Unpermitted Discharges	314	11%
Rivers	274	10%
Wetlands	246	9%
On-Site Wastewater	236	9%
Air	151	6%
Lakes and Ponds	143	5%
Stormwater	88	3%
All Other Programs	269	10%
Total	2732	100%

The top categories of violations found in 2025 are present in the figure below.



Program	Total	Percent
HAZ-MAT Releases	559	46%
Wetlands	140	12%
Solid Waste Dumping	125	10%
Unpermitted Discharges	86	7%
On-Site Wastewater	73	6%
Air	51	4%
Rivers	45	4%
Lakes and Ponds	33	3%
All Other Programs	105	9%
Total	1217	100%

Summary of Incidents Received and/or Resolved

January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025

Division	Total Incidents Received 2025	Pending Of Those Received in 2025	Closed No Violation	Closed NOAV Issued	Closed Citation Issued	Closed Voluntarily Corrected/ No Further Action Required	Closed Formal Action Requested/ Taken	Closed No Formal Action Taken*	Total Closed
Environmental Compliance Division	1951	678	1337	55	12	471	26	77	1978
DEC Media Programs	781	102	146	1	1	459	26	72	705
Total	2732	780	1483	56	13	930	52	149	2683

*Reflects complaints closed through other means, e.g. lack of evidence, lack of cooperation from complainant, referred to the appropriate regulatory program or NRB, unable to respond, or violation found/enforcement action not pursued

ANR closed five (5) cases informally in 2025. Closed informally means an enforcement attorney was able to obtain compliance without the need for formal legal action, or further investigation may reveal that an enforcement action was no longer needed or appropriate, or one case is consolidated with another and closed.

Summary of Formal Court Actions

January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025

Type	Number Issued	Penalties Assessed	Penalties Collected
Administrative Orders	6	\$72,125.00	\$40,033.00
Assurances of Discontinuance	16	\$93,653.13	\$78,999.79
Supplemental Environmental Project	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Civil Citations	13	\$18,750.00	\$18,750.00
Emergency Orders	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total	35	\$184,528.13	\$137,782.79