

Request for Approval of Items by the Arkansas CARES Act Steering Committee - State Agency

Form No.
CARES-St Agency-001

9905 Business Area Energy & Environment Cabinet Name / Division Name

Description of Item:
Dell Mobile Precision 3451 Laptop

Quantity Requested	Unit/Case Price	Estimated Cost
60	\$1,469.66	\$88,179.60

Justification of Need:
See Attachment #1

Becky W. Hoyle Signature of Secretary
Amel Yordan Signature of Division Director

Signature of Secretary

Signature of Division Director

5/26/2020 Date
5/26/2020 Date



ARKANSAS

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

ATTACHMENT #1

In responding to the COVID-19 national health crisis, the Department of Energy and Environment moved nearly 400 employees into remote work to reduce the risk of the spread of the virus and to protect the safety and health of those employees and their loved ones. This move to remote work required the Department to enhance its IT capabilities so that it could continue to provide effective and efficient energy and environmental solutions to the people of Arkansas. Appropriate laptop technology was necessary so that staff could access the Department's VPN and perform critical functions, including inspections and monitoring of systems vital to public health. Providing this technology to staff allowed the Department to maintain its mission of promoting responsible management of resources and protecting the environment.

Office of Air Quality:

The Office of Air Quality (OAQ) had limited remote work capabilities before this public health crises with the exception of the compliance branch. With the purchase of the referenced technology, the OAQ Permits Branch was able to transition to 100% remote work operations and continue its operations with minimal disruption. Without this ability, OAQ Permits Branch would not have been able to continue to issue timely, if at all, critical permitting actions that allow Arkansas industry to construct and operate new facilities or modify existing facilities that have sources of air emissions. This would have substantial negative impact on facilities with air emissions above certain levels including a wide range of heavy industrial facilities.

Office of Land Resources:

Last year, DEQ's Office of Land Resources (OLR) initiated a multi-year, ongoing plan to equip OLR staff with remote work capabilities. However, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, roughly 40% of OLR staff was still lacking remote work technologies therefore the purchase of the referenced laptops has allowed additional staff members to continue with their important work remotely.

Productivity for Solid Waste and Hazardous Waste Permit Engineers is critical for DEQ's responsibility to provide permitting services to the regulated community. Hazardous Waste Management Facilities and Solid Waste Districts rely on these permits to operate as required by state and federal laws, including the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. With the allocation of additional laptops, OLR's Regulated Waste Operations have been able to assist the regulated community as usual ensuring environmental protection. Additionally, the allocated laptops allowed critical work to continue in maintaining DEQ's Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA/Superfund) responsibilities. Critical work includes Site Inspection reports to fulfill CERCLA grant requirements, completing Superfund groundwater monitoring, reviewing work plans, and reimbursement of on-call contractors. Allocated laptops have allowed OLR to fulfill FOIA requests remotely.

Arkansas' Petroleum Storage Tank Trust Fund has continued to disburse an average of \$250,000 each month based on OLR's application review and the Petroleum Storage Tank Advisory Committee's recommendations received during the monthly meetings that have continued remotely. These disbursements are critical to Arkansas' economy and businesses funding the tank clean-up. OLR staff has maintained their productivity throughout the pandemic including issuing the recent disbursement of \$1.2M in payments to local tire districts funneling funds back into Arkansas that help to enrich and protect the environment. In addition, \$4 Million in Recycling and E-Waste disbursements are processed annually by OLR's financial staffing using allocated laptops.

Office of Water Quality:

The Office of Water Quality did have limited remote work capabilities before the current health crisis, but these assets were specific to certain divisions. Several OWQ divisions/areas did not have remote work capability at all and the purchase of the referenced laptops allows those divisions to continue to function. For the OWQ Planning Section, the lack of technology would mean that permit reviews, 401 certifications, and data analysis for the 305(b) report would not be possible. The negative impacts to the State from this lack of operational ability would include delays in issuing permits, delays in issuing STAAs or 401 certifications which could postpone road or construction projects, and delays in federally mandated Clean Water Act deadlines such as the Integrated Report. For OWQ Permit Section any loss in employee capability represents a loss in productivity and puts the permitting section critically behind in our capability to provide permitting services to the regulated community. Businesses and other entities need these permits to operate as required by state and federal laws, including the Clean Water Act. Production at manufacturing plants and proper wastewater treatment at treatment facilities would come with legal uncertainties regarding compliance and good standing under applicable rules and law. Waters of the State could be left unprotected and the level of protection could not be verified without proper permits that specify protective requirements. Moreover, the OWQ Enforcement Branch issues permits to facilities to construct, operate, and discharge wastewater throughout the State. Permits require monthly submission of Discharge Monitoring Reports (DMRs), Sanitary Sewer Overflow Reports, and Permit Compliance Reports. Not maintaining these services will lead to delays in permit issuance, enforcement actions, as well as delays to public assistance. These delays could result in failure to monitor and ensure compliance with the permits, thereby adversely impacting the waters of the State.