

# 2024 SUSTAINABILITY REPORT



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# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

With great pride and gratitude, I share GEL's first Sustainability Report. Since our founding in 1981, being responsible stewards of the environment and natural resources has been central to our Core Purpose. In 2024, we strengthened this commitment by formally establishing our Corporate Sustainability Program.

Over the past year and a half, we've laid a strong foundation to build upon. In 2023, we hired a fulltime sustainability specialist dedicated to monitoring and implementing sustainability strategies. In February of 2024, we implemented our Sustainability Policy and formed Impact Teams to set goals and strategies for each of our Priority Areas.

The journey toward greater sustainability is not without its challenges. Our work at GEL Laboratories enables clients to protect the environment and human health, but lab operations are inherently resource-intensive, requiring significant energy, water, and materials. Outside of the lab business, many of our services within GEL Engineering and GEL Solutions require significant mileage on the road. Addressing these challenges requires thoughtful dialogue and strategic action, which we will continue into 2025 and beyond. We view these obstacles as opportunities for innovation and collaboration, and I'm proud of the progress our teams have already made.

Looking ahead, we are steadfast in our commitment to driving positive change. Two of our primary goals in the coming years will be to reduce our electricity and water use through sustainable strategies and investments. We will be working in 2025 to gather data and determine ambitious but achievable goals for these priorities.

As we continue this journey, I invite you—our valued stakeholders—to join us in shaping a sustainable future. Your support and engagement are critical to our collective success. Together, we can create a legacy of resilience and stewardship for generations to come.

Thank you for your trust and partnership. I look forward to what we will achieve together.

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The GEL Group, INC



President and Chief Executive Officer



# ABOUT THE GEL GROUP, INC.

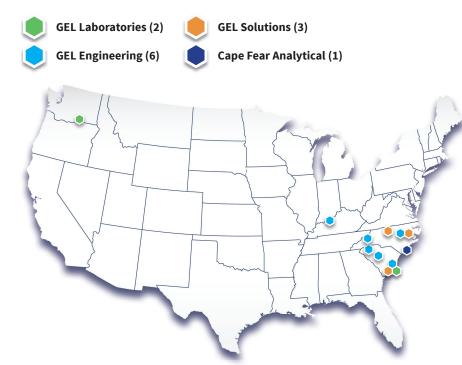


### Overview

Since 1981, The GEL Group, Inc. (GEL) has provided high-quality environmental services, ranging from analytical testing and environmental consulting to civil engineering and surveying. Our team of over 360 dedicated professionals deliver innovative solutions and high quality, defensible data to help clients achieve their technical and environmental goals.

Privately owned and based in Charleston, South Carolina, GEL includes its member companies and affiliates: GEL Laboratories, LLC; GEL Solutions, LLC; GEL Engineering, LLC; GEL Engineering of NC, Inc.; and Cape Fear Analytical, LLC. Together, we offer a diverse range of specialized services designed to meet the needs of our clients and support sustainable practices.

### Locations





# PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE REPORT

### Why focus on Sustainability?

Since our founding, GEL has been committed to improving quality of life by helping people protect and be good stewards of the environment. This Core Purpose drives the work we do each day to support our clients. Embracing sustainability is fundamental to this pursuit.

Caring for the environment and giving back to the community are deeply ingrained in our company culture and are central to how we attract and retain top experts in the services we provide. Many GEL employees have chosen their career path and a position at GEL because they are passionate about making a positive impact on the environment and their communities.

While we have been helping our clients be good stewards for decades, we also have an immense opportunity within our own operations to minimize our impact. An intentional focus on sustainable practices has the potential to improve efficiencies, enhance the well-being of our GEL community, provide cost-saving opportunities, and contribute to the long-term success of our business.

We also recognize that addressing environmental challenges is critical—not just for our clients but for the broader world we all share. As we navigate these challenges, we aim to lead by example, demonstrating that a commitment to sustainability is not only ethically important but also essential for long-term business resilience and success.





### What does sustainability mean to us?

At GEL, we define sustainability as *intentional stewardship and innovation to ensure the long-term well-being of our GEL Family, our business, our community, and our environment.* 

To establish our priorities, we conducted a materiality assessment that included benchmarking against industry competitors, examining client reporting requirements, reviewing international standards of sustainability reporting (such as the UN's Sustainability Development Goals and the Global Reporting Initiative), analyzing consumption costs, and conducting an employee survey.

We established five priority areas as a result of our assessment that will guide us moving forward. Topics were prioritized most significantly by employee feedback, utility cost, and client requests.



# PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE REPORT

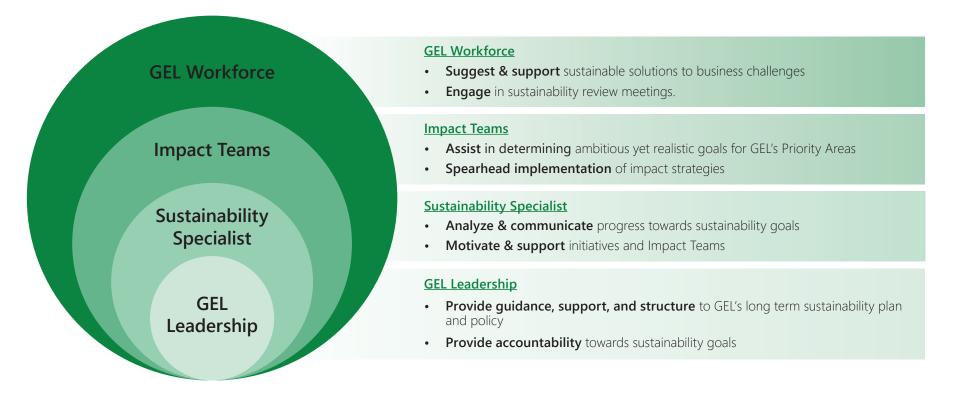
### Corporate Responsibility and Sustainable Governance

In 2024, GEL established the foundation of its sustainability program with the creation of an official Sustainability Policy. This policy defines sustainability for GEL, outlines our Priority Areas, and sets our accountability structure.

A successful sustainability program requires collaboration across the company. Each member of the GEL community has the opportunity to engage, while dedicated teams lead strategies in each Priority Area. GEL's Sustainability Specialist oversees data collection, analysis, implementation strategies, and communication regarding our sustainability progress.

GEL's Senior Leadership Team, led by President and CEO Mac Hodgson, provides feedback and approves updates to our purpose, values, strategies, and goals related to our sustainability program. This team reviews GEL's sustainability performance in bi-annual meetings led by the Sustainability Specialist and approves the content of this 2024 Sustainability Report.

Looking ahead to 2025, we aim to finalize updates to our Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct, maintain open communication with our clients on sustainability progress, and align with their supply chain goals.



# PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE REPORT

### Why are we publishing a Sustainability Report?

Transparency and accountability are foundational to GEL's sustainability program. GEL's senior leadership team is provided bi-annual performance updates to ensure accountability and progress. Furthermore, we hope that this report will provide our co-workers, clients, and community with clarity regarding our efforts.

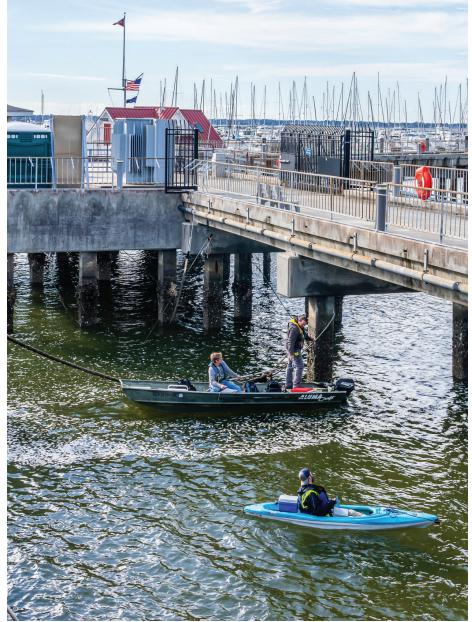
We acknowledge that this is GEL's first sustainability report and that our program is in its beginning stages. We have significant room to grow and learn. We want to remain open with our stakeholders throughout this journey and plan to give updates moving forward.



### Scope of this report:

This report was created with reference to the GRI Standards for the period of January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024, unless otherwise indicated. The report contains sustainability data for The GEL Group, Inc. and its member companies and affiliates: GEL Laboratories, LLC, GEL Solutions, LLC, GEL Engineering, LLC, GEL Engineering of NC, Inc., and Cape Fear Analytical, LLC (collectively "GEL"). GEL is a privately held company and does not disclose financial statements. GEL's disclosures are not assured by a third party. GEL's senior leadership reviews and oversees sustainability progress and reporting. This report was published in Spring 2025.

So far, GEL's sustainability efforts have been primarily focused on our headquarters in Charleston, SC, where the majority of our workforce and laboratory operations are located.



# Advancing Sustainability Through our Services

Working with our clients to achieve their environmental goals allows us to facilitate environmental sustainability and generate a positive environmental impact. In this section, we highlight three projects that have helped our clients achieve their environmental, sustainability, and resilience goals.

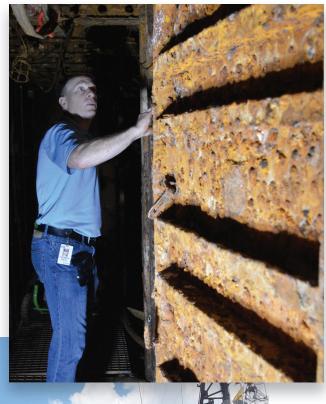
# OUR SUSTAINABLE SERVICES

### USS Yorktown | GEL Engineering, LLC and GEL Laboratories, LLC

GEL is proud to support the environmental assessment and remediation of the USS Yorktown, an iconic landmark moored in Charleston Harbor at Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum. This project was funded by the South Carolina Office of Resilience (SCOR), with GEL working alongside the primary contractor to address legacy hazardous materials and the deteriorating hull—protecting the environmental and economic value of the surrounding waterways.

GEL Engineering's Industrial Hygiene (IH) group conducted a Health Risk Assessment to evaluate employee and public exposure risks to asbestos, lead-based paint (LBP), and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) aboard the ship. The IH group also developed an asbestos design specification for removal in the ammunition and pump rooms and provided air monitoring during abatement. GEL Laboratories analyzed collected samples for PCBs, RCRA metals, and Diesel Range Organics (DRO). Additionally, GEL Engineering's Structural Engineering Group performed structural assessments and assisted with the development of repairs.

Through this collaboration—both within GEL and with clients and partners on SCOR-funded initiatives—we continue our commitment to sustainable, resilient solutions.



# OUR SUSTAINABLE SERVICES

### Project IKE | GEL Laboratories, LLC

GEL Laboratories delivers critical environmental analysis to UCOR for Orano's planned Project IKE uranium enrichment facility in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Through our ongoing analyses, we support the responsible reuse and reindustrialization of The Department of Energy's (DOE) Oak Ridge properties, ensuring redevelopment is guided by sound environmental science.

Orano's operations will play a key role in strengthening the U.S.'s production of reliable, low-carbon nuclear energy—an essential component of our increasingly electrified world. In 2024, GEL completed a preliminary analysis of samples collected at a 30-acre scrap yard within the planned 920-acre site and is actively evaluating surface water, sediment, and soil contamination in nearby watersheds. By delivering critical environmental insights, we help pave the way for responsible land reuse, economic growth, and a cleaner energy future.





Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant (PGDP) Source: https://www.energy.gov/ea/paducah-site

### Portsmouth and Paducah | GEL Laboratories, LLC

The DOE Portsmouth and Paducah sites are being transformed through the "Cleanup to Clean Energy" initiative, launched in 2023. This program re-purposes remediated land for alternative energy projects, including Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), with input from local communities. Currently, 300 acres at Portsmouth and 200 acres at Paducah are available, with additional land opening in 2026.

A critical step in this transition is ensuring the land meets environmental release criteria. GEL Laboratories supports this effort by performing chemical and radiochemical analysis of soil that are critical to securing funding for clean energy development. Our work enables the safe reuse of these sites, paving the way for a low-carbon energy future and economic growth.

# Sustainable Operations

Alongside our services, we have opportunities within our own operations to advance sustainability practices. This section outlines our benchmarks and progress for our priority areas.

### 1. About Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions

GEL's GHG emissions will be tracked annually with a base year of 2024 for future comparisons. Our emissions are categorized as Scope 1 (direct) and Scope 2 (indirect) emissions, based on the internationally recognized Greenhouse Gas Protocol.

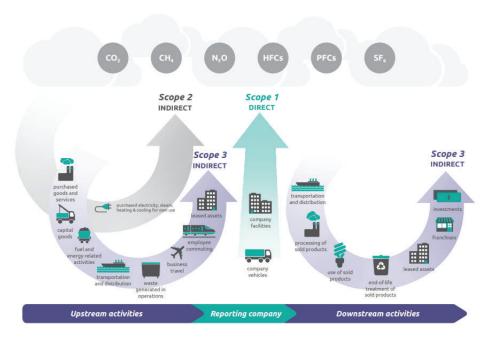
- Scope 1: Direct emissions from owned or controlled sources. For GEL, emissions are from company-owned vehicles, natural gas burned onsite, refrigerant, and purchased gases.
- Scope 2: Indirect emissions from the generation of purchased electricity used by GEL.

We have not calculated Scope 3 emissions for 2024. Scope 3 emissions include all other "indirect emissions" that occur in the value chain including business travel, waste disposal, and transportation of supplies. While not a priority in 2024, this will be reevaluated in the future.

### 2. Calculation Methods

Emissions were calculated for The GEL Group, Inc. using the Greenhouse Gas Protocol operational control approach.  $CO_2$ ,  $CH_4$ ,  $N_2O$ , and HFCs are the material GHGs emitted by GEL. Global Warming Potential (GWP) rates for these gases are sourced from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Sixth Assessment Report (IPCC AR6). The base year of emissions calculations for The GEL Group, Inc. will be 2024. While emissions were calculated for 2023, more accurate data for refrigerants and the vehicle fleet were available for 2024 calculations, making 2024 a more representative calculation.

For Scope 1 calculations, vehicle emissions are calculated using monthly odometer readings and gas purchasing reports; natural gas use data found from utility bills; propane data gathered from purchasing records; refrigerant data supplied from our contractor; and purchased gas quantities pulled from internal purchasing records. Scope 2 emissions were calculated from monthly utility bills from January 2024 through December 2024. Our Asheville location is not able to track electricity use due to the leasing agreement.



Source: WRI/WBCSD Corporate Value Chain (Scope 3) Accounting and Reporting Standard (pdf), page 5.



### 3. GHG Emissions

Scope 2 Location-Based emissions are calculated based on the average emissions rates of electricity grids in which use occurs. Emission intensities were sourced from EPA's Emissions & Generation Resource Integrated Database (eGRID) subregions for each GEL location.

Scope 2 Market-Based emissions are calculated based on utility specific emission rates for each location and reflects emissions from electricity that companies have purposefully chosen. For example, GEL Charleston's solar panels offset over 37 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO2e) and this value is integrated into the Market-Based calculations.

GEL's Market-Based Scope 2 emissions are greater than the Location-Based calculation because GEL Charleston's utility has a higher emission rate per megawatt-hour (MWh) of electricity produced than the average of the SRVC eGRID subregion. GEL Charleston accounts for approximately 85% of GEL electricity use and thus has a significant impact on emission calculations.

### Scope 1 and Scope 2 (Market-Based) GHG Emissions Intensity



**8.8** 2024 Scope 1 and 2 Emissions per full time employee (MTCO2e/FTE)



#### Scope 1 and Scope 2 GHG Emissions

Emissions Category	2024 (MTCO2e)
Scope 1 GHG Emissions	926
Vehicle Fleet	518
Stationary Combustion (Natural Gas and Propane)	255
AC & Refrigerant	150
Purchased Gases	3
Scope 2 GHG Emissions (Location-Based)	1,628
Scope 2 GHG Emissions (Market-Based)	2,324
Total Scope 1 and 2 (Market-Based) GHG Emissions	3,250

Note: MTCO2e stands for metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent.



### 4. Electricity

Laboratories are resource intensive buildings due to ventilation requirements and energy intensive equipment. In 2024, approximately 85% of our electricity was consumed at our headquarters in Charleston, SC. The Charleston campus is our largest site and home to our primary lab. Our second highest electricity consumer was Cape Fear Analytical's laboratory location, consuming approximately 14% of The GEL Group's electricity use.

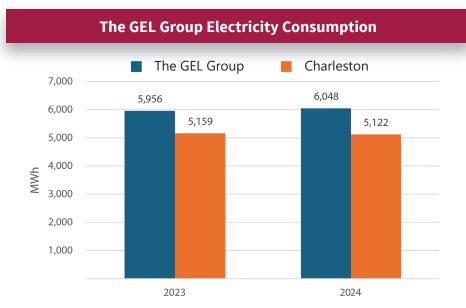
While The GEL Group's electricity use has increased from 2023 to 2024, several indicators are trending in a positive direction. GEL Charleston—our largest user—decreased its electricity use by 0.7% from 2023 levels despite a record-breaking year for lab tests completed. These efficiencies are largely due to replacing HVAC and equipment with more efficient alternatives. Our business also grew significantly between 2023 and 2024, decreasing the intensities of MWh used per full-time employee.

We will continue to explore energy efficiency strategies moving into 2025.





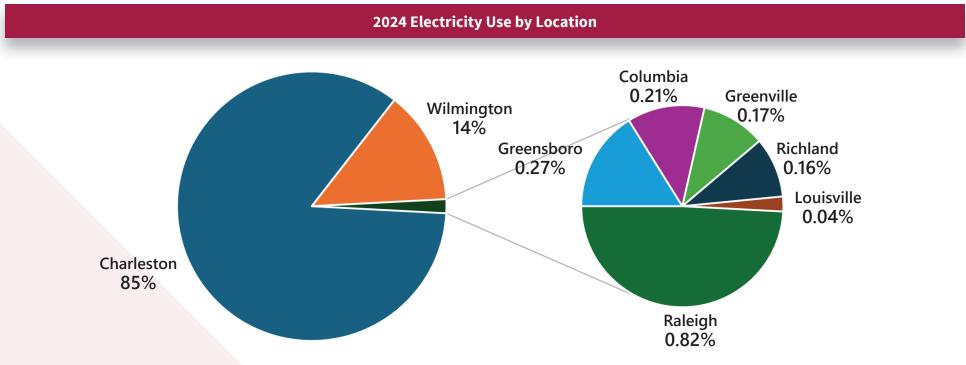




### The GEL Group Electricity Use Intensities

## **Electricity Use per Full-Time Employee (MWh/FTE)**







### Solar Power at GEL

In 2016, GEL took a significant step toward sustainability by installing a 75 kW rooftop solar panel system, aligning with our commitment to environmental stewardship and the values we uphold as a business. Since its installation, the system has generated over 620 MWh, enough to power approximately 57 homes for a year.

We entered into a Bill Credit Agreement with our utility provider, enabling us to sell the electricity generated back to the grid. Since 2021, the panels have yielded over \$65,000 in savings.



### **EV Chargers**

In 2022, GEL installed two 7.2 kW Level 2 electric vehicle chargers at our Charleston facility. This installation was done to promote the adoption of electric vehicles by our employees and to provide capacity for potential future electric company vehicles.



# WASTE & RECYCLING



GEL generates various waste streams, primarily from laboratory operations. These waste streams are carefully monitored and managed in compliance with all local, state, and federal regulations.

In 2024, GEL focused on consolidating waste stream tracking for the Charleston campus. Additionally, research was conducted to explore new opportunities for material exchange and recycling, with implementation planned for 2025.

A comprehensive waste profile is not included in this 2024 report as a monitoring system has not been completed for all nine GEL locations. However, future reports will aim to provide a more complete assessment as data collection expands across all facilities.





GEL Charleston ran a composting trial in a breakroom in early Fall 2024. GEL employees successfully diverted over 50 pounds of food waste and coffee grounds from the landfill over the course of six weeks. Due to the popularity of the trial, we will evaluate future composting opportunities in 2025.

# WASTE & RECYCLING



### A Waste-Conscious Thanksgiving

GEL's annual Thanksgiving Lunch struck a new tone this year. With a goal of diverting 75% of waste from the landfill, a supervised waste station was set up to separate landfill, recyclable, and compostable items. BPI-certified compostable plates and cutlery were used at the event.

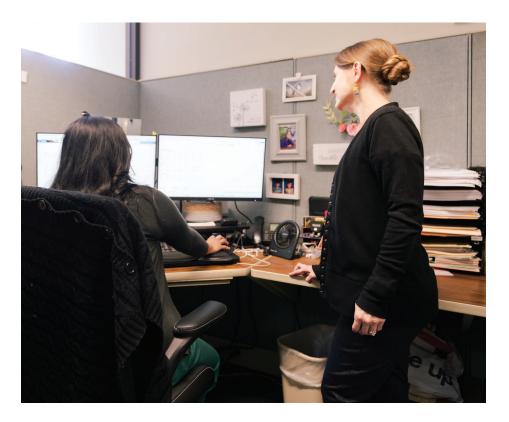
Overall, we were able to successfully divert 119.5 lbs of waste from the landfill—72% of our event's total waste!

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## **REAMS OF PAPER SAVED**

Thanks to the intentional efforts of GEL's accounting department to manage items electronically, 70 reams of paper were saved in 2024.

Our accounting group exemplifies a trend throughout our company of making concerted efforts to decrease paper use through electronic management of documents, deliverables, and reports.





The purpose of the Community & Wellness (C&W) Priority Area is to enhance GEL's culture of community and belonging, provide education and opportunities for individual wellness, and to make giving back to our local community more accessible. This section will highlight efforts taken by GEL to fulfill this purpose.

GEL has a strong history of hosting donations and volunteerism. Multiple times throughout the year, donation drives are hosted by Team Members for hygiene products, diapers, holiday gifts, back to school supplies, etc.

In February 2024, the Community & Wellness Team was formed by volunteers from all areas of GEL's business. Their purpose is to build opportunities for GEL employees to connect and to provide educational opportunities to improve employee wellness.

### Walk for Water and Shared History with Water Mission

George and Molly Greene, the founders of GEL, felt called to help after Hurricane Mitch devastated the people and infrastructure of Honduras and Nicaragua in 1998. After contacting the episcopal bishop of Honduras- whom they had met previouslythe engineers at GEL set about designing and building six drinking water systems.

Over the next two years, George and Molly founded and ran the nonprofit Water Mission and ultimately decided to pursue their work with Water Mission full time. GEL is proud of our shared history and continues to be active participants in Water Mission's annual Walk for Water.

The Walk for Water in Charleston, SC is an annual event to raise awareness and funds to fight global water crises. In 2024, **196** people participated on GEL's team and raised **\$26,458** (including corporate donation match and some vendor donations) to support the mission.









# **5** UNITS OF BLOOD DONATED

by GEL employees in 2024. GEL maintains a strong partnership with the American Red Cross and looks forward to continued collaboration in 2025.





### Wellness Week

The C&W Team hosted a Wellness Week in October 2024. The goal of the week was to share information and GEL resources that support the different aspects of wellness, from financial to physical to mental wellness.

GEL employees also had an opportunity to participate in a step challenge. Over the course of a week, **58 people participated** and logged **over 2 million steps**.



### Food Trucks

GEL hosts, on average, 2-3 local food trucks on site every week. Not only is it a great way to share lunch with co-workers and try new cuisine, but it is also a valued way to support local businesses in the area.

# **4.5** Items of clothing, shoes, and bags

were donated to the Clemson Clothing Closet. This drive was organized by an employee after seeing a posting for a job <u>fair GEL</u> was attending.



as well as gift cards were donated to HALOS Back to School Drive in 2024.





### **Hurricane Helene Donations**

Hurricane Helene caused massive damage on the southeast region in September 2024. Having family, friends, and cherished natural and cultural spaces impacted by this event, GEL employees took action to raise funds and physical supplies.

Together, GEL employees raised \$4,430. Thanks to GEL's company match plus a little extra—our GEL community donated a total to \$10,000 to relief efforts organized by Water Mission.

In addition to the monetary donations, a generous number of tangible items, from food and water to clothing and essential supplies, were donated to local relief efforts.

We are proud to do our part to provide much-needed relief to those impacted by the hurricane.





On April 8, 2024, GEL employees gathered outside to observe the partial solar eclipse. Organized by the C&W Team, specialty safety glasses that met the ISO 12312-2 standard for eclipse viewing were purchased by GEL for employee use.



GEL has collaborated with Trident United Way for the past several years to support our local community.

GEL employees also participated in TUW's Day of caring, supplying 1,154 diapers and 810 wet wipes.



### Earth Week

GEL hosted its first Earth Week celebration in April of 2024. Organized by GEL's Community & Wellness Team, the week was full of celebration, community donations, and e-waste recycling.

Highlights of the week include:

- Over 100 lbs. of electronic waste were collected to be recycled E-recycling is important as it conserves rare, valuable materials like copper, gold, and aluminum, and limits the need for further mining of these resources, which can harm the environment and human health.
- A "community swap" event was hosted in which Team members brought in unwanted household items to exchange. All leftover items were donated to two local non-profits.
- Team members and their children were invited to participate in an Earth Day themed art competition. After fantastic participation and voting, a kids and adult winner were chosen (pictured right).
- A pollinator garden was planted on-site to encourage local pollinator populations.







# WATER CONSERVATION

Water is essential to life, ecosystems, and economies. Beyond providing services that help ensure healthy water sources for our communities, we recognize that responsible water management within our own operations is a critical part of our sustainability efforts. Our approach to water stewardship focuses on identifying conservation opportunities and taking meaningful action to reduce our impact.

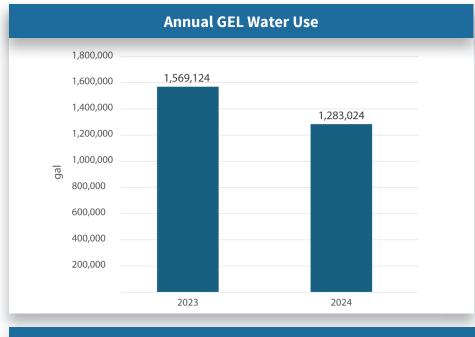
This section outlines our water use and progress from 2023. Currently, data on GEL's water consumption is available for only four of our nine locations—Charleston, SC; Columbia, SC; Greenville, SC; and Richland, WA—due to lease agreements. Of these, the Charleston campus accounts for approximately 99% of GEL's total tracked water use. In 2024, our overall water consumption decreased 18% compared to 2023, largely due to leak repairs at the Charleston campus.

Looking ahead to 2025, we remain committed to further conservation efforts, including continued leak detection and repair, installing lowflow aerators, increasing education on water efficiency, and exploring rainwater collection opportunities at the Charleston campus.

18% EDUCTION IN ABSOLUTE WATER USE FROM 2023 TO 2024 21% EDUCTION IN WATER USE INTENSITY FROM 2023 TO 2024



# WATER CONSERVATION

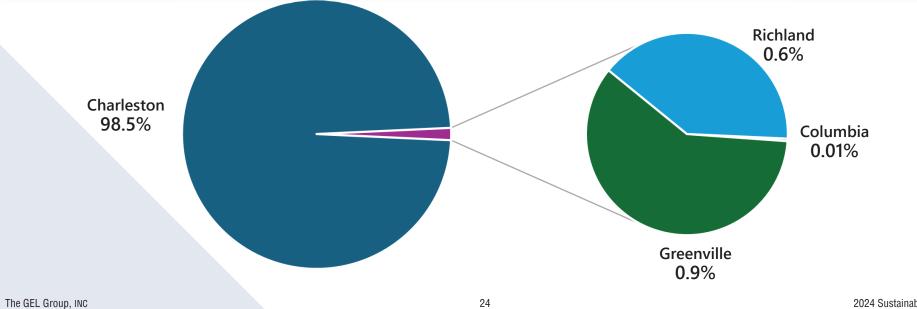


The GEL Group Water Use Intensity

Gallons Used per Full-Time Employee (gal/FTE)



2024 Water Use by Location



# WATER CONSERVATION



### Reduced Sample Volume (RSV) Initiative

GEL Laboratories, LLC is proud to introduce our Reduced Sample Volume (RSV) initiative—an innovative step forward in efficient, sustainable environmental testing. RSV allows clients to submit 250 mL of sample—one-fourth the traditional 1,000 mL requirement—for PCB analysis (8082, 608.3) while achieving detection limits that are still lower than most regulatory limits and industry standards. For clients that need ultra-low reporting limits, GEL continues to offer the 1000 mL option. This reduction not only simplifies sample collection and handling, but also cuts shipping costs, maximizes shipping capacity, and supports waste and solvent reduction—all without compromising reporting limits.

GEL will continue to explore areas to expand the RSV program as a part of our ongoing commitment to innovation and environmental responsibility. Whether you're looking to streamline logistics, reduce your carbon footprint, or enhance efficiency, RSV offers a smarter way forward. To learn more about how RSV can benefit your projects, please contact your GEL project manager or a client services representative today.



### **GRI Content Index**

Statement of useThe GEL Group, Inc. has reported the information cited in this GRI content index with reference to the GR through December 31, 2024, unless otherwise noted.		The GEL Group, Inc. has reported the information cited in this GRI content index with reference to the GRI Standards for the period January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024, unless otherwise noted.
	GRI 1 used	GRI 1: Foundation 2021

GRI Standard	Disclosure	Location
	2.1 Organizational Details	Page 4
	2-2 Entities included in the organization's sustainability reporting	Page 7
	2-3 Reporting period, frequency and contact point	Page 7 Page 27
	2-4 Restatements of information	This 2024 Sustainability Report is GEL's first report.
	2-5 External assurance	Page 7
	2-6 Activities, value chain and other business relationships	Page 4
GRI 2: General Disclosures 2021	2-7 Employees	369 full-time employees at The GEL Group, INC as of December 31st, 2024. Further disclosures are omitted in this 2024 report due to confidentiality constraints.
	2-8 Workers who are not employees	Omitted from this 2024 report due to confidentiality constraints.
	2-9 Governance structure and composition	Page 6
	2-10 Nomination and selection of the highest governance body	Page 6
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	305-4 GHG emissions intensity	Page 13
	305-5 Reduction of GHG emissions	Pages 12-13

Thank You

Do you have questions related to this report? Do you need our sustainability or environmental services?

Please contact us at sustainability@gel.com



The GEL Group, Inc. 843.556.8171 www.gel.com