

Governor Shapiro Signs Executive Order Adding Pennsylvania Permit Fast Track Program to Administration's Broader Efforts to Improve Permitting Processes

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On November 19, 2024, Governor Josh Shapiro signed **Executive Order 2024-04** (EO 2024-04) creating the Pennsylvania Permit Fast Track Program (Program). According to its website, the Program “streamlines permitting for high-impact economic development and infrastructure projects in Pennsylvania that require multiple permits from different Commonwealth agencies.” Commw. of Pa., “PA Permit Fast Track Program,” available [here](#). EO 2024-04 states that the Program's purpose is to “enhance public awareness, collaboration, accountability, coordination, transparency, and predictability in the Commonwealth's permitting, licensing, and authorizations processes for critical infrastructure projects and projects delivering significant economic development to Pennsylvanians” through a collaborative process between the government and stakeholders. EO 2024-04, § 1.

EO 2024-04 directs the state Office of Transportation and Opportunity to take certain actions to implement the Program. These include: (1) issuing program guidance, offering training, and providing technical assistance to implement the Program; (2) determining if a project is eligible to participate in the Program; (3) providing project management services via coordination with the Governor's office, e.g., developing coordinated timelines across relevant agencies; and (4) assisting with the online dashboard to inform the public of progress and timelines for designated projects. *Id.* § 2. Permits that may be fast-tracked under the Program include Chapter 102 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits for Construction Stormwater and Industrial Stormwater, Chapter 105 Permits for water obstructions and/or encroachments, and Air Quality Permits. See Program website. Guidance and current Program projects are also listed on the Program's website. *Id.*

EO 2024-04 is just one of the Shapiro administration's ongoing efforts to improve Pennsylvania's permit programs. On the same day Governor Shapiro signed EO 2024-04 the administration announced that the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) had reduced its permit backlog by 75% since November 2023.

News Release, PADEP, “Shapiro Administration Reduces DEP Permit Backlog by 75 Percent, Completely Eliminates Backlog for Oil and Gas Permits” (Nov. 19, 2024). PADEP attributes the reduction to technology investment, reviews to identify bottlenecks, and hiring additional staff. *Id.* PADEP has also created the Streamlining Permits for Economic Expansion and Development (SPEED) Program, which authorizes approved contractors to review applications for certain permits and recommend to PADEP whether the permit should be approved or denied. Bids to become a qualified reviewer were due by December 31, 2024. More information on the Shapiro administration's permit modernization efforts is available [here](#).

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