

The Permitting Council Update



BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



JUNE 2024



Greetings from the Executive Director

“ On behalf of the Permitting Council, I hope you are having a fantastic kickoff to the unofficial start of summer. While the warm weather

months bring to mind visions of backyard barbecues and long-awaited vacations with the family, here at the Permitting Council, we will continue our work to effectively manage our portfolio of FAST-41 covered projects and promote permitting excellence across government.

Since the last newsletter, we made significant progress on several initiatives, including awarding Environmental Improvement Fund (ERIF) assistance for Tribes through our Tribal Assistance Program (TAP) as well as funding information technology products and tools at federal agencies to promote greater efficiency and effectiveness. And we recently announced a first-of-its-kind state-permitting collaboration with the New Mexico Renewable Energy Transmission Authority (RETA) to spur coordination and advance accountable environmental reviews and authorizations for qualifying projects across the state.

Our plate is indeed full, but this is an exciting time to be working in the permitting universe, and we are thankful to have all of you working with us as our trusted stakeholders. Check out this month's newsletter for details on some of the biggest efforts we have been working on, and as always, make sure to get the latest by following the Permitting Council on LinkedIn and X/Twitter.



In partnership,
Eric Beightel

Executive Director
The Permitting Council



News from the Office of the Executive Director

Permitting Successes | ERIF TAP Awardee | Annual Report

Permitting Council and the New Mexico Renewable Energy Transmission Authority (RETA) Sign First of its Kind Agreement to Spur Coordination and Advance Infrastructure Projects

The Permitting Council is excited to announce a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the New Mexico Renewable Energy Transmission Authority (RETA). The MOU establishes a working relationship between the Permitting Council and RETA in order to provide federal permitting support to RETA supported projects that also qualify for coverage under the Permitting Council's FAST-41 program. This new, collaborative state-federal partnership will help bring the benefits of federal permitting assistance to New Mexico and help bring consequential infrastructure projects to life.

[Learn more at permitting.gov](https://www.permitting.gov)

Biden-Harris Administration Announces Major Permitting Wins

On April 30th, the White House announced key permitting successes from the administration, including highlights of significant contributions by the Permitting Council to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and timeliness of federal environmental reviews and permitting of infrastructure. The White House-issued fact sheet is one outcome of the Permitting Action Plan released by the White House in 2022 in an effort to help industry move forward with key investments and projects, including building out clean energy and transmission, while also being responsible stewards of the environment and protecting communities. To read the Permitting Action Plan, see the link below.

Biden-Harris Administration Announces Historic Investments to Increase Tribal Engagement and Improve Infrastructure Permitting Reviews

The Permitting Council recently announced its first Environmental Review Improvement Fund Tribal Assistance Program (ERIF TAP) awards totaling over \$1.3 million to the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. The Council launched this financial assistance program in response to requests from Tribes for resources to help them meet increased permitting demand and to meaningfully engage in the environmental review

process of FAST-41 covered projects. Both Tribes will use these funds to support engagement and consultation for a number of offshore wind projects on the Eastern seaboard that may affect Tribal interests. These funds are enabled by the Permitting Council’s \$350 million from President Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). To learn more about ERIF and the investment, see the link below.

Permitting Council Makes \$30 Million Investment in Federal Agency Innovative Information Technology (IT)

The Permitting Council is pleased to announce the allocation of over \$30 million in funding to enhance permitting efficiency across the federal government through the use of technology. These funds will enable federal agencies to build and improve critical IT tools and invest in innovative technologies to advance the efficiency of federal permitting reviews and authorizations of infrastructure projects. These investments come at a critical time to enable agencies to meet the influx of applications resulting from once-in-a-generation investments from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, CHIPs and Science Act, and Inflation Reduction Act.

[Learn more at permitting.gov](https://www.permitting.gov)

Permitting Council Annual Report to Congress Showcases a Year of Significant Growth and Progress in Federal Environmental Review and Authorization

This past April, the Permitting Council unveiled its Annual Report to Congress, showcasing a year of tremendous growth and forward-thinking innovation. The agency made substantial investments in the permitting review and authorization processes, while assisting several impactful projects to the permitting finish line during FY 2023. Check out the full report on [permitting.gov](https://www.permitting.gov) to see how together we are making next-generation infrastructure a reality.





Largest Offshore Wind Project in U.S. History Receives Full Federal Environmental Permitting Approval

The Permitting Council is pleased to announce that Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind is the latest project to complete its required federal environmental

permitting review and authorizations with permitting assistance from the Council. The \$9.8 billion renewable energy project is expected to power up to 660,000 homes. Learn more at the link below.

Winnebago Tribe Broadband Connectivity Project is the Latest Project to Receive Permitting Assistance from the Permitting Council

The Permitting Council is pleased to announce the latest project to receive permitting assistance through the FAST-41 program, the Winnebago Tribe Broadband Connectivity Project. This \$35 million project aims to bring critically needed broadband infrastructure to over 800 households, 46 businesses and 16 Tribal institutions in Winnebago, Nebraska. Learn more at the link below.

Staffing News

Permitting Council Director of Tribal Affairs Takes on New Biden–Harris Administration Post at White House Council on Native American Affairs

The Permitting Council is excited to announce that PoQueen Rivera, Director of Tribal Affairs, has transitioned to serve as the acting Executive Director of the White House Council on Native American Affairs (WHCNAA). In this role, Rivera will lead the WHCNAA's collaborative inter-agency work to realize its mission of bringing prosperity and resilience to all Tribal nations.



 **PoQueen Rivera**
New Executive Director of the White House Council on Native American Affairs

PoQueen served as the first-ever Director of Tribal Affairs for the Permitting Council, where she was responsible for building the agency's Tribal program. During her tenure, Rivera ushered in the first Tribal projects to ever receive FAST-41 permitting assistance from the Permitting Council, a total economic investment of over 100 million dollars. Rivera also spearheaded numerous Tribal priorities, including the creation of the Environmental Review Improvement Fund Tribal Assistance Program (ERIF TAP), a financial assistance program launched in response to requests from Tribes for resources to help them meet increased permitting demand and to meaningfully engage in the environmental review process.

While we will certainly miss the enthusiasm and commitment PoQueen showed in her work as Director of Tribal Affairs, we are excited about the amazing work she is about to spearhead as she advances the mission of the White House Council on Native American Affairs.

The Permitting Council Welcomes Angela Colamaria as New Director of Permitting Planning and Policy



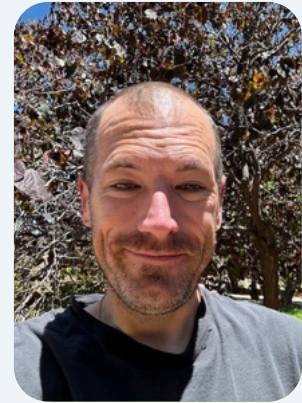
 **Angela Colamaria**
*Director of
Permitting Planning
and Policy*

The Permitting Council is pleased to welcome Angela Colamaria as its new Director of Permitting Planning and Policy. As part of the Permitting Council leadership team, Colamaria will work to improve the efficiency and accountability of environmental review and authorizations for infrastructure projects nationwide, as the agency works to fulfill its role in making once-in-a-generation infrastructure projects a reality.

Colamaria will lead the Permitting Council's efforts to advance the agency as a center for permitting excellence across the federal government. She will provide strategic direction to develop, manage and direct programs that advance the timeliness and effectiveness of permitting reviews and authorizations. This role will entail working extensively across the permitting community to understand opportunities and challenges in infrastructure permitting and to drive programs and initiatives that support permitting excellence. Learn more about Ms. Colamaria at [permitting.gov](https://www.permitting.gov).

Chris Huntsman Joins the Agency Operations Team

Chris Huntsman joins the Permitting Council from the USDA Forest Service, where he spent the first fourteen years of his federal career serving in various human resources roles, including recruitment and placement, classification, and benefits and retirement. Most recently, he was the supervisory human resources specialist leading the HR service team responsible for over 900 Forest Service Business Operations employee customers. He is very excited to bring his knowledge in federal staffing to the Permitting Council so we can grow together. Chris lives in Albuquerque, NM, with his wife, Suzanne, two boys, CJ and Bobby, and his axolotl, Peaches.



▶▶ **Chris Huntsman**
Human Resources Officer

We're Hiring!

Are you interested in supporting our work as a center for permitting excellence? We're seeking qualified candidates to join our team as an Associate Director of Reporting and Evaluation to streamline reporting and best practices for our agency.

Scan here to
learn more
about this
opportunity



News from the Permitting Council

White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Finalizes a Rule to Reform, Simplify, and Modernize the Federal Environmental Review

This past April CEQ finalized the Bipartisan Permitting Reform Implementation Rule (BPRI), which simplifies and modernizes the federal environmental review process, while fully implementing the new efficiencies Congress passed in the Fiscal Responsibility Act. BPRI sets clear deadlines for agencies to complete environmental reviews, requiring a lead agency and setting specific expectations for lead and cooperating agencies as we work together to create a unified and coordinated federal environmental review process. In addition, the rule provides agencies with a variety of tools to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of environmental reviews. Learn more about BPRI at the link below.

Department of Energy (DOE) Establishes New Program to Improve Environmental Review and Authorizations for Transmissions Projects

In April, DOE issued a final rule to establish the Coordinated Interagency Transmission Authorizations and Permits (CITAP) Program, which aims to significantly improve federal environmental reviews and permitting processes for qualifying transmission projects. The Permitting Council partnered with DOE on formulating the final rule and will support new project submissions that fall under CITAP. Moving forward, DOE will coordinate a federal integrated interagency process to consolidate federal environmental reviews and authorizations within a standard two-year schedule, while ensuring meaningful engagement with Tribes, local communities, and other stakeholders. This final rule, initiated and completed in under a year, implements a May 2023 interagency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to expedite the siting, permitting, and construction of electric transmission infrastructure in the United States. This rule is the latest action toward the Administration's commitment for up to \$331 million aimed at adding more than 2,000 megawatts (MW) of additional grid capacity throughout the Western U.S. – the equivalent to powering 2.5 million homes.



Around Town with the Permitting Council


National Association of Environmental Professionals Annual Conference and Training Symposium

Thank you to the National Association of Environmental Professionals for hosting our team at the annual conference in May! Executive Director Beightel was pleased to join the Plenary Discussion with Brenda Mallory, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, and Sara C. Bronin, Chair of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, to talk about how the Permitting Council is working alongside environmental professionals to advance transparency and efficiency in environmental review and authorization.

 *Executive Director Eric Beightel (center) on a panel at the National Association of Environmental Professionals Annual Conference and Training Symposium*





 Panel at the Oceantic Network's IPF panel

International Partnering Forum

Permitting Council team members were pleased to participate in the government panel at the Oceantic Network's International Partnering Forum (IPF) in April. IPF connects global leaders and businesses in the offshore wind supply chain, allowing for important information exchange on topics from technology and policy to safety and siting.

American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) Annual Convention and Legislative Summit

Permitting Council Executive Director Eric Beightel enjoyed participating in the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) Annual Convention and Legislative Summit! Director Beightel had the opportunity to present on how the Permitting Council is advancing permitting excellence across the environmental review universe, working to accelerate next generation infrastructure project delivery.

 Executive Director Eric Beightel speaking on advancing permitting excellence to accelerate infrastructure project delivery



The Permitting Council in the News

Bloomberg Law

White House doles out \$30 million for AI to help in permitting

E&E News by Politico

Nation's largest offshore wind farm clears final federal hurdle

Bloomberg Law

Biden's permitting office to help New Mexico with renewables

Albuquerque Journal

New federal partnership focused on streamlining clean energy permitting

ERIF TAP

Environmental Review Improvement Fund Tribal Assistance Program

The Permitting Council is still accepting applications for the Environmental Review Improvement Fund Tribal Assistance Program (ERIF TAP). Scan the QR code and learn more about the application process and apply now!

Scan here for
resources to
apply for ERIF
TAP



Contact Information

Thank you for checking out the Permitting Council newsletter. Keep up with everything related to FAST-41 infrastructure projects by following the Permitting Council on social media.



@PermitCouncil



Permitting Council



permitting.gov

Newsletter Submissions

The Permitting Council Office of the Executive Director is excited to use this newsletter to amplify all the great work being done at our member agencies. We welcome you to submit content featuring your agency's efforts to improve the transparency, predictability, and outcomes of the federal environmental review process for our next newsletter. Please email media@permitting.gov with newsletter submissions (maximum 400 words).