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The Permitting Council Update



BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

▶▶ MARCH 2024



Greetings from the Executive Director

“ On behalf of the staff at the Permitting Council, I hope you are having a wonderful start to spring. Since our last edition our office has grown rapidly, both in staff and visibility. It has been a busy time for our agency, with site visits to several FAST-41 covered projects, agency convenings with project sponsors, and our fair share of roll up your sleeves coordination meetings with stakeholders across the permitting review landscape. But one of the most exciting new efforts to come out of our office was just unveiled in the last few days—a brand for the Permitting Council.

As we approach the 10th anniversary of the FAST Act and the establishment of our agency next year, we thought it was time for a branded identity that truly showcases the collaborative and transformational work we are doing to improve the federal environmental review and permitting processes. From Permitting Council staff to our federal agency partners and industry stakeholders, together we are rewriting the story of federal permitting review in order to bring once-in-a-generation infrastructure projects to life. Check out this month’s newsletter for more details on the new look of the Permitting Council and how it will help take us into the next chapter in our agency’s history.

Spring is here and with it brings a season of optimism and excitement, as temperatures rise, flowers bloom, and every Major League Baseball team is looking forward to playing in October. I am thrilled to align that same positive sentiment with our activities here at the Permitting Council, as we head into a robust season of collaboration and coordination for projects that could transform our future.



In partnership,
Eric Beightel
 Executive Director of the Permitting Council

FAST-41 Project Site Tours

South32 Hermosa | Santa Fe Indian School | Port of Baltimore


Permitting Council Explores Broadband Breakthrough in Rural New Mexico, Eyes Critical Minerals Project in Arizona and Considers Expansion of the Port of Baltimore to create jobs and boost economic development.

In January, Permitting Council agency staff toured communities in New Mexico that could benefit from a FAST-41 covered project aimed at expanding broadband access to Tribes and remote areas of the state. The Santa Fe Indian School project is not only the the first FAST-41 broadband-related project, but it is also the first project to be sponsored by a Tribe. If approved, the proposed 324 mile-long fiber network will provide high speed internet access to nearly two dozen pueblos and remote tribal communities in New Mexico that struggle to maintain high-speed internet access.

The project will enable community members to more effectively participate in the digital economy and will improve last-mile internet access to homes, community centers and tribal businesses. The developer, the Pueblo Education Network, also helps connect tribal PreK-12 schools and libraries to each other and to national research and education networks, modernizing Tribal education in the global information age.

During the same two-day visit, Permitting Council staff also took a site tour of the South32 Hermosa Critical Minerals Project, a proposed zinc and manganese mining operation with the potential to contribute to the clean energy transition through domestically sourced materials necessary for EV battery manufacturing. Zinc and manganese play a pivotal part in the national push for a resilient, domestically supported large-capacity battery supply chain. If approved, this nearly \$2 billion project would be one of the largest investments in Arizona’s history and the largest ever for Santa Cruz County.



 Permitting Council staff tour the South 32 Hermosa Critical Minerals project in Arizona.

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▶▶▶ Permitting Council staff tour the Sparrows Point Container Terminal in Maryland



In February, Permitting Council staff visited the proposed Sparrows Point Container Terminal (SPCT) project, which is located within the 330-acre Port of Baltimore in Maryland. If the application to widen and deepen the Port is approved, SPCT will create thousands of additional port-related jobs and dramatically enhance and support the long-term growth of the Port as a global shipping receiving center. SPCT is also the next major phase of redevelopment of the former Sparrows Point Steel Mill, which closed in 2012.



News from the Office of the Executive Director

[New Staff](#) | [New Brand](#) | [FY 2025 Budget Request](#) | [Clean Air Act](#)

Welcome Monica Sanchez

The Permitting Council is pleased to announce the appointment of Monica Sanchez as its new Director of Public Engagement. Ms. Sanchez was most recently the Director of External Affairs for the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE). She brings a wealth of experience driving high-impact initiatives and public awareness campaigns for the federal government.



In her new role, Ms. Sanchez will lead the Permitting Council's stakeholder engagement and communications activities, working to build a greater understanding of the Council's role in re-shaping the federal environmental review and authorization processes. She has specific rich experience in energy efficiency, sustainable transportation, and renewable energy from her time with EERE and earlier as a staff member for various members of Congress from Arizona and her native New Mexico.

New Branding for the Permitting Council

For the first time since our inception in 2015, the Permitting Council engaged in a brand refresh that more closely reflects our philosophy and areas of focus. From a new logo and seal, to our first-ever tagline, this new branding showcases the evolution of the Permitting Council and the collective work we are all pursuing to make federal permitting reviews accountable, efficient and effective for all stakeholders. Our new logo and seal carry a stylized set of arrows, which represent how the Permitting Council’s partners coalesce to create progress in the federal permitting journey. Individual squares form the arrowhead that points to the Council’s name - a symbol of our aspiration to collectively provide expert, efficient, and clear guidance along the permitting path.



Where projects see progress

We are excited to begin showcasing our new branding over the coming months as we work toward next year’s 10th anniversary of the enactment of FAST-41. We encourage your teams to use this new branding as you incorporate the Permitting Council in your materials. Agencies represented on the Permitting Council will soon receive the updated logo and seal for official purposes. Other organizations wishing to use the new branding should contact media@permitting.gov to receive an appropriate file size

Permitting Council Releases FY 2025 Budget Request



The Permitting Council recently released its fiscal year 2025 budget, requesting \$9 million in appropriated funds for the continued operation of the agency. These funds would enable the growing agency to build out to full staffing capacity, in order to fulfill its goal of bringing efficiency and accountability to the federal permitting review process. The requested \$9 million in funding is directly in support of the operations of the agency, including salaries and expenses for 40 employees in order to reach full staffing capacity levels. This funding is key to effectively carrying out the Permitting Council’s work to transform the federal permitting process, providing funds to enable targeted outreach to bring greater awareness of the benefits of FAST-41 and to increase project participation in the program. To read the FY 2025 budget, visit permitting.gov.

To read the FY 2025 Budget Request, visit the [Reports and Publications](#) section of permitting.gov.

OCS Air Permitting under the Clean Air Act (CAA) Virtual Seminar

On February 26, 2024, the Permitting Council, along with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), hosted a convening with EPA air quality experts and invited industry representatives to talk through the Air Permit Program. This seminar included an overview of Outer-Continental Shelf (OCS) permitting under the Clean Air Act, best practices in OCS air permitting (including expectations for completing OCS permit applications and conducting air quality modeling for OCS projects), and an opportunity for constructive dialogue between participants. This convening provided a great first step in demystifying a very complex process.

Executive Director Speaks at Connected America



 Executive Director Eric Beightel at the Connected America conference.

Permitting Council Executive Director Eric Beightel recently spoke at the 3rd annual Connected America conference in Dallas, Texas. The event brings together communications service providers at the national, state, and local levels alongside the public sector and suppliers to discuss how to improve broadband coverage in

America. Executive Director Beightel delivered the governmental address at the conference, showcasing how the Permitting Council can play a pivotal role in getting critically needed broadband projects permitted across the county.

University of Utah Symposium

Executive Director Eric Beightel recently gave a keynote address at the University of Utah's 29th Stegner Center symposium in Salt Lake City. This year's symposium focused on the transition to a carbon-neutral energy system, and Executive Director Beightel spoke about the important role the Council plays in assisting in the permitting of these projects as the agency works to help realize the clean energy future.

 Executive Director Eric Beightel at the University of Utah's 29th Stegner Center Symposium



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News from the Permitting Council

Approved Permits | New FAST-41 Projects | Tribal Funding

Approved FAST-41 Projects

Empire Wind: The Permitting Council is pleased to announce federal environmental permitting approval for the Empire Wind project. The \$3 billion offshore wind project is expected to generate 2.1 GW of renewable energy, potentially powering over 700,00 New York homes.

The 138 turbine project is located approximately 14 statute miles offshore New York and 19.5 statute miles offshore New Jersey. In addition to bringing critically needed renewable energy to New York consumers, project sponsors anticipate that the project will contribute to the state's renewable energy development goals, and provide significant economic benefits to New York.

The Permitting Council is the central coordinating body for permitting offshore wind energy in the U.S. and serves as a key implementing agent of the Biden-Harris Administration's goal to deploy 30 gigawatts (GW) of offshore wind by 2030. The Department of the Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management served as the lead agency for Empire Wind's permitting review.

South Fork Wind: On March 14th federal and state leaders gathered on Long Island, New York to commemorate the completion of construction of South Fork Wind, the first offshore wind project to obtain coverage from the Permitting Council's FAST-41 program. The \$740 million project is the first offshore wind project in New York state and is already playing a significant role in making the clean energy future a reality.

South Fork Wind is a 132-megawatt offshore wind farm consisting of 12 wind turbines located 19 miles southeast of Block Island, Rhode Island, and 35 miles east of Montauk Point, New York. The project is a key component of the Permitting Council's renewable energy portfolio, which now has a total of 15 offshore wind projects.

The Department of the Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management led permitting review for the South Fork Wind project since it joined the FAST-41 program in August 2018.

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

New FAST-41 Projects

Grain Belt Express: The Permitting Council is pleased to announce that the Grain Belt Express project is now covered under the FAST-41 program. Coverage under FAST-41 will ensure that the project has a transparent project timetable and will facilitate coordination between the project sponsor, the Department of Energy and the other Federal agencies that will play a cooperating role on the project’s environmental review and permitting actions. If permitted, this \$2 billion electricity transmission project could play a transformational role in helping states and utilities in the Midwest shift from fossil fuel generation.



 Grain Belt Express project map

Phase one of the Grain Belt Express project is a bi-directional high-voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission line spanning approximately 542 miles across Kansas and Missouri. If permitted, this project is intended to facilitate the delivery of affordable, reliable, domestically produced renewable energy generation to the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and Associated Electric Cooperative Incorporated (AECI) territories in the Midwest. In addition to spurring the transition from fossil fuel generation to clean energy technology, project sponsors anticipate that this project will enable affected states to meet their renewable energy portfolio requirements and goals, while creating economic opportunity and energy security.

[Learn more at **permitted.gov**](https://www.permittings.gov)



To learn more about the Grain Belt Express project, [click here](#).

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Silver Star Solar 1: This Nevada-based infrastructure project is now receiving permitting assistance from the Permitting Council. If approved, this \$1 billion solar power and battery storage system project could bring clean, renewable energy to residents in the western United States. The Silver Star Solar 1 project is a 650 megawatt (MW) alternating current solar photovoltaic power generating facility with a 650 MW battery energy storage system. If permitted, it would be located on Department of the Interior (DOI) Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land in the unincorporated Town of Amargosa Valley, Nye County, Nevada. Multiple solar projects have received FAST-41 permitting assistance since the Permitting Council's inception in 2015, including three solar projects that have completed the permitting process and obtained necessary permit approvals. The Silver Star Solar 1 project joins fellow in-progress Bonanza Solar on the Permitting Council's Federal Permitting Dashboard.

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



The Permitting Council in the News

Tribal Business News

New Mexico Broadband Application Site Tour

Engineering and Mining Journal

South32's Hermosa Project Achieves Key Operational Milestones

Baltimore's CBS News Affiliate

Permitting Council's tour of the Port of Baltimore

Offshore Magazine

US approves Rhode Island's \$1.5B offshore wind farm

Navajo-Hopi Observer

DOE agrees to ease access to federal funding for Hopi and Navajo tribes

E&E News by Politico

Biden Budget Seeks Permitting Money as Lawmakers Eye Deal

Links for the articles include [Tribal Business News](#), [Engineering and Mining Journal](#), [Baltimore's CBS News Affiliate](#), [Offshore Magazine](#), [Navajo-Hopi Observer](#), and [E&E News by Politico](#).

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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**

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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).



Thank You!

Follow us on X/Twitter [@PermitCouncil](https://twitter.com/PermitCouncil) and LinkedIn at [Permitting Council](https://www.linkedin.com/company/permitting-council).

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