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Greetings from the Executive Director



**Christine Harada,
Executive Director**



Office of the Executive Director

Greetings from the Executive Director:

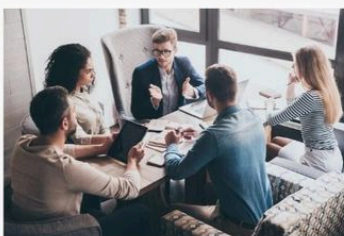
On behalf of the Permitting Council Office of the Executive Director, I hope you are having a wonderful start to the fall season. There is lots of exciting news coming out of the Permitting Council agencies this month as we all work to realize the once-in-a-generation infrastructure goals of the Biden-Harris Administration.

The passage of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) has highlighted the important work of the Permitting Council to the entire country, showcasing how our goal to make the permitting process better coordinated, more collaborative, and ultimately more transparent, will help advance the deployment of smart, equitable, and sustainable infrastructure. With the passage of the IRA, the Permitting Council received \$350 million to spearhead permitting efficiency and predictability through 2031. These funds will help us provide agencies with the support they need to efficiently review FAST-41 projects. Check out this month's newsletter for updates on a variety of topics, from details on how we are working to support Permitting Council agencies in hiring expert staff, to the latest on FAST-41 covered projects like Mid-Barataria and Beacon Wind.

I hope you enjoy this month's newsletter and I look forward to working with you to make the #InfrastructureDecade a reality.

Christine Harada
The Permitting Council, Executive Director

Permitting Council Issues Basic Order Agreement to Simplify the Hiring Process for Experts



If your agency is in need of contracting assistance to fulfill project management, environmental review and permitting goals, there is now a new tool available to help. The Permitting Council, in coordination with the General Services Administration (GSA), has issued a Basic Order Agreement (BOA) to seven contracting companies in support of infrastructure permitting. With this contracting tool, Federal agencies will have access to industry experts that can help accommodate the increase in infrastructure projects coming down the pipeline as a result of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

Federal agencies involved in the environmental review and permitting process have long expressed difficulties in obtaining the contracting expertise needed for strengthening the permitting process. Agencies often need a range of expertise, from experts in the implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), to skilled public involvement coordinators and academics in order to effectively move a project through the review process. GSA's Basic Order Agreement is a resource tool for expediting contracting for certain government needs. In terms of the infrastructure permitting process, the BOA will serve as a marketplace of GSA-approved vendors that offer a wide variety of environmental review and permitting-related services upon which Federal agencies can draw to support the increase in FAST-41 covered infrastructure projects after the passage of the BIL.

Selected BOA contractors include a wide range of expertise, from engineers to environmental consultants, with a variety of company types represented, including women-owned small businesses:

- ICF
- HDR
- The Shipley Group
- Industrial Economics Group, Inc.
- Solv
- The Clark Group, LLC
- WSP US

For more information on how to use this BOA, please visit the GSA [website](#).

Six Technology-Related Infrastructure Sectors Added to FAST-41

President Biden signs law to make technology-related projects eligible for FAST-41 coverage



There are now six new technology-related FAST-41 infrastructure sectors. The new sectors include:

- Semiconductors
- Artificial intelligence and machine learning
- High-performance computing and advanced computer hardware and software
- Quantum information science and technology
- Data storage and data management
- Cybersecurity

The addition of these critical technology sectors may help spur production of semiconductor factories, advanced technologies, and research facilities across the country, potentially opening new doors for breakthroughs in emerging fields like quantum computing and artificial intelligence.

News from Council Member Agencies



New FAST-41 Project: On September 29, 2022, the Beacon Wind offshore wind project became a FAST-41 covered project. If authorized, Beacon Wind will provide renewable power to over a million households in the Northeast.

The Beacon Wind project is proposed to be developed in phases. This first phase could provide generation capacity of 1,230 megawatts (MW) of renewable offshore wind power to New York. When combined, the active offshore wind projects in the Equinor and BP FAST-41 covered project portfolio – Empire Wind 1, Empire Wind 2 and Beacon Wind 1 – could produce about 3.3 gigawatts (GW) of power to the State, enough electricity to power about 2 million homes.

USACE Releases FEIS Notice of Availability for the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion Project



On September 23, 2022, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New Orleans District released the Notice of Availability for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion Project. This is a significant step for the project, and one that showcases how enhanced coordination and collaboration across multiple Federal agencies and programs leads to increased efficiencies in the permitting process.

The proposed project is a controlled sediment and freshwater intake diversion structure in Plaquemines Parish on the right descending bank of the Mississippi River. The Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA)-sponsored project will include a conveyance system that would discharge sediment, fresh water, and nutrients from the Mississippi River into an outfall area within the mid-Barataria Basin in Plaquemines and Jefferson Parishes, if permitted. The USACE published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS in 2013, and in 2017 the Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group (LA TIG) of the Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment Louisiana Restoration Area issued a notice that described its decision to support the development of a single EIS that can satisfy NEPA requirements for both the USACE and the LA TIG Federal Trustees in potential restoration efforts in the Barataria Basin.

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This decision increased efficiency and reduced redundancy by avoiding development of two separate NEPA analyses for the same project. Federal and state member agencies of the LA TIG participated in the development of the draft EIS as cooperating agencies.

The proposed project also has included robust public engagement, including with communities impacted by environmental justice concerns. Communities and groups engaged included fishers, navigation, and other industry representatives, local communities, and Tribes. CPRA also engaged residents of nearby Ironton, home to one of Louisiana's oldest black communities.

The progress of this project is a prime example of the collaboration, coordination, and transparency that is key to the work of the Permitting Council. We look forward to more stories like this one, as we all work to reach our shared goal of forwarding infrastructure projects that will benefit people across the nation.

News from the Office of the Executive Director

Alaska Native Village Cooperation Association:

On August 25, Executive Director Harada attended a lunch and learn with the Alaska Native Village Cooperation Association (ANVCA). The event was dedicated to educating attendees on the Permitting Council and FAST-41, as Executive Director Harada highlighted how the program could be a significant asset as they consider applying for FAST-41 coverage for eligible projects. ANVCA's mission is to promote the success of their Village Corporations and the protection of Native lands.



Executive Director Christine Harada and Councilman David Weeden, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe/Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head-Aquinnah Visit:

In September, the Executive Director traveled to Massachusetts to visit with the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head-Aquinnah. These Government-to-Government meetings provided an opportunity to inform participants about the new infrastructure-specific Tribal benefits in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, including the Permitting Council's Tribal funding transfer. These meetings also provided a chance to sit down with Tribal leaders and learn firsthand about their experiences with the offshore wind permitting process and how it can be improved.

USACE Regulatory Program Executive Training Seminar:

On September 22, Executive Director Harada presented on the work of the Permitting Council for new and incoming Commanders as part of the USACE HQ Regulatory Training. The purpose of the visit was to educate new Commanders on the FAST-41 process, and create and strengthen relationships with the agency. This is the second visit by Director Harada to this seminar, and the Executive Director looks forward to continuing to dialog with USACE leaders.

DOI National Tribal Broadband Summit:

Executive Director Harada spoke at the DOI National Tribal Broadband Summit on September 27, presenting as part of a session titled Permitting and Managing Multi-Jurisdictional Projects. The Executive Director spoke about the potential benefits of FAST-41 for Tribal broadband projects and the new funding transfer opportunities available under IIJA.

Gemini Solar + Storage Launch Event:

Executive Director Christine Harada was excited to attend the Gemini Solar + Storage Showcase on October 14, 2022. Federal, Tribal, state and local leaders gathered with the Primergy team to highlight the benefits of this FAST-41 approved project. Led through the permitting process by the Department of the Interior/Bureau of Land Management, this \$1.2 billion infrastructure investment will be the largest solar project on U.S. soil.

The Permitting Council in the News



- **Federal Permit Office Outlines Big Plans for Climate Law Funding:** Bloomberg Law interviewed Executive Director Christine Harada on plans for the \$350 million in new Inflation Reduction Act funding for the Permitting Council.
- **Permitting Office Wants Unions at Table, Even if Hands Are Tied:** Bloomberg Law interviews Executive Director Christine Harada on the Biden-Harris Administration's work to promote labor unions in the infrastructure development process.
- **Permitting Council Allocates Inflation Reduction Act Funding to Accelerate Infrastructure Agenda:** Government Matters TV interviews Executive Director Christine Harada on plans for the Inflation Reduction Act's \$350 million investment into infrastructure permitting.

Thank you for checking out this month's Permitting Council newsletter. Keep up with everything related to infrastructure projects covered by FAST-41 by following the Permitting Council on LinkedIn and Twitter.

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@fpisc.gov with newsletter submissions (maximum 400 words).

News Article Links

- [Federal Permit Office Outlines Big Plans for Climate Law Funding](#)
- [Permitting Office Wants Unions at Table, Even if Hands Are Tied](#)
- [Permitting Council Allocates Inflation Reduction Act Funding to Accelerate Infrastructure Agenda](#)

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