

FACT SHEET | Permitting Reform

Better Government for a Better Minnesota

When Governor Dayton took office in 2011, he made streamlining the environmental permitting process a top priority. Previously, businesses in Minnesota were often forced to wait months, and sometimes even years, to have their permits approved by state agencies. Long, unnecessary delays cost businesses time and money, and stifled job creation. But thanks to new reforms implemented by Governor Dayton and the Legislature, more than 97 percent of priority permits are now issued in less than 150 days.

During the 2014 legislative session, the Governor signed legislation reducing those wait times for most businesses to just 90 days. This new measure will help ensure that an estimated 11,000 of the 15,000 permit requests the state receives from businesses each year are completed within the new 90-day goal – allowing Minnesota companies to get the permits they need in a timely, more efficient manner.

Building on Previous Reforms

- **Minnesota Has Made Major Progress.** Before Governor Dayton overhauled the permitting process in 2011, businesses were often forced to wait months, and sometimes even years, to have their permits approved. Long, unnecessary delays cost businesses time and money, and stifled job creation. This year, the Legislature and Governor have further streamlined the process to promote economic growth and job creation.

Improving Efficiency, Reducing Wait Times

- **Ten-Year Permits for Low-Risk Projects.** Rather than asking businesses to re-apply for non-controversial permits every five years, the new law creates a ten-year permit for non-federal permits that present a low risk to our environment and human health. To ensure strong environmental protections, businesses that propose changes to their facilities within that ten-year time-period would be required to re-submit their permit application for review.
- **A Two-Tiered Strategy for Streamlining Permit Review.** The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Department of Natural Resources review and issue a wide variety of complex permits every year. To ensure these permits are reviewed responsibly and efficiently, the new law creates a new two-tiered system that will improve the permitting process.
 - **90-Day Goal** – An estimated 11,000 permits every year, including the most general and registration permits for air, water, and land, will be issued in 90 days or less.
 - **150-Day Goal** – Most complex air, water, and land construction permits that require public comment periods and more detailed review will be issued in 150 days or less.
- **Making the Permitting Process More Flexible.** If a business wants to expedite their project, they can help pay for private consultants and staff overtime at state agencies after a permit application has been submitted for approval. To make the process even more flexible, the new law now allows businesses to speed up the permitting process before it starts – creating a fee-for-service model that involves state agencies earlier in the process to eliminate confusion and ensure the business and state regulators have clear expectations and a shared understanding of the project.