



News for Immediate Release

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DEP Releases Draft Permit Improvement Policies for Public Comment

Two Webinars Will Offer Additional Information, Answer Questions

Harrisburg – The Department of Environmental Protection has submitted for publication in the Sept. 1 Pennsylvania Bulletin drafts of its Permit Review Process and Decision Guarantee and Permit Coordination policies. The policies are open for public comment until Oct. 1.

The policies implement Gov. Corbett's July 24 Permit Decision Guarantee Executive Order, outlining the process DEP will use to guarantee an efficient timeframe in which the agency will make a decision on complete permit applications and authorizations.

"Governor Corbett promised to reform how government operates in Pennsylvania," DEP Secretary Mike Krancer said. "Good government means the efficient delivery of services, and that includes DEP permitting decisions. This process asks everyone to do a better job: DEP, businesses, non-profit organizations, local governments and consultants who work for these groups."

DEP studied applications and permit procedures and discovered that about 40 percent of permit applications submitted to DEP are deficient, meaning they lack full information needed for DEP's permit reviewers to make a sound decision.

"That creates a waste of everyone's time," Krancer said.

Under the new process, if a permit application is deficient—requiring it to be returned twice—DEP may deny it.

"Setting the clear expectation that every permit application should be correct and complete the first time is the key to efficiency on both sides," Krancer said. "We need to free our staff from what amounts to a merry-go-round of reviewing deficient applications; returning them to the applicants; and, essentially, doing applicants' work to make the applications shipshape."

An important feature of the Permit Review Process and Decision Guarantee is that it strongly encourages applicants to arrange pre-application meetings with DEP to discuss the agency's expectations during the permitting process and learn their obligations as applicants. It also prioritizes the order in which permits are reviewed.

“The Permit Review Process and Decision Guarantee enables our staff to do their main job of concentrating on protecting the environment and making decisions. At the same time, it gives the regulated community a more predictable and efficient permit application review and decision process,” Krancer said. “We encourage the public and all stakeholders to review the draft policies and offer feedback to us.”

The companion Permit Coordination policy outlines how staff should coordinate projects that require multiple permits. DEP staff will review the policies’ effectiveness annually and make any necessary adjustments. The agency plans to develop electronic permitting tools to further improve the process.

DEP will host two web-based information sessions about the draft policies, with time for questions and answers, from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 5, and Monday, Sept. 10.

To register for the webinars and review the draft policies and executive order, visit www.dep.state.pa.us and click the “Permit Decision Guarantee” button.

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