

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4503

AN ACT

To improve environmental reviews and authorizations through the use of interactive, digital, and cloud-based platforms, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “ePermit Act”.

3 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

4 The Congress finds that—

5 (1) coordination between Federal, State, and
6 local agencies and project sponsors is critical to en-
7 suring the timely and effective completion of envi-
8 ronmental reviews and authorizations, including
9 through the sharing of relevant information, align-
10 ment of environmental review timelines, and integra-
11 tion of authorizations, while maintaining compliance
12 with applicable statutory and regulatory require-
13 ments;

14 (2) digital strategies for environmental reviews
15 have proven to make the community engagement
16 process more accessible, available, and transparent
17 to all stakeholders, especially the communities in
18 which new projects are built;

19 (3) establishing robust data architectures will
20 ensure data integrity, improve transparency, reduce
21 costs, and enhance the ability of the Federal Govern-
22 ment to serve the public;

23 (4) Federal agency use of modern software that
24 can track the full lifecycle of environmental reviews
25 and authorizations is critical for—

1 (A) effective project management and
2 process improvement;

3 (B) enabling workflow automation, trans-
4 parency, and tracking; and

5 (C) simplifying reporting requirements;

6 (5) modern business process management sys-
7 tems that track Federal agency workflows and
8 produce vendor neutral, interoperable event, task,
9 and other milestone data that can be shared with
10 other Federal agency systems can reduce costs and
11 improve performance for Federal agencies respon-
12 sible for environmental reviews and authorizations;

13 (6) case and project management systems—

14 (A) are essential tools for managing the
15 tasks and activities associated with environ-
16 mental reviews and authorizations; and

17 (B) provide Federal agencies more data
18 and insight into such environmental reviews
19 and authorizations;

20 (7) well-defined business rules can enable proc-
21 ess automation that allows Federal agencies respon-
22 sible for environmental reviews or authorizations to
23 expedite routine tasks and workflows, and improve
24 transparency and accuracy of project timeline esti-
25 mates, which in turn can help project sponsors bet-

1 ter plan for application preparation and project de-
2 livery milestones;

3 (8) taking a standardized, digital-first perspec-
4 tive to environmental reviews and authorizations at
5 Federal agencies responsible for environmental re-
6 views or authorizations will improve document qual-
7 ity, lead to more concise reports, enable the reuse
8 and accessibility of the data underpinning Federal
9 agency analyses and decisions, and enable objective,
10 technology-assisted evaluation of environmental im-
11 pacts, analysis, and documentation, and accelerate
12 future environmental reviews and authorizations;

13 (9) Federal agencies responsible for environ-
14 mental reviews or authorizations, project sponsors,
15 and the public should have access to up-to-date in-
16 formation on accurate timelines and the status of
17 environmental reviews and authorizations; and

18 (10) allowing for seamless information exchange
19 among Federal agencies and between Federal agen-
20 cies and project sponsors will increase predictability
21 and efficiency of environmental review and author-
22 ization schedules for project sponsors.

23 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF DATA STANDARDS.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the
25 date of enactment of this Act, the Chair of the Council

1 on Environmental Quality, in consultation with the Fed-
2 eral Permitting Improvement Steering Council, the Chief
3 Information Officers Council, the Office of Management
4 and Budget, and other relevant stakeholders and Federal
5 agencies, shall develop, publish, and iteratively update
6 data standards for the collection and curation of author-
7 ization data by Federal agencies, which shall be used to—

8 (1) assist with environmental reviews and au-
9 thorizations;

10 (2) organize, define, and standardize various
11 concepts, formats, and protocols that are included in
12 environmental reviews and authorizations; and

13 (3) reduce the need for redundant environ-
14 mental reviews by creating a shared vocabulary and
15 software systems that will support vendor neutrality,
16 data interoperability, workflow automation, and
17 automatic data exchange between Federal agencies.

18 (b) INCLUSIONS.—The data standards developed,
19 published, and iteratively updated under subsection (a)
20 shall include the following:

21 (1) A standardized taxonomy that allows Fed-
22 eral agencies to identify and track data types, rela-
23 tionships, and values.

24 (2) Comprehensive categories for data, such
25 as—

- 1 (A) projects;
- 2 (B) processes;
- 3 (C) environmental documents;
- 4 (D) public comments;
- 5 (E) geospatial information;
- 6 (F) public engagement events, as applica-
- 7 ble by process or Federal agency;
- 8 (G) case events; and
- 9 (H) milestones to ensure clarity and uni-
- 10 formity.

11 **SEC. 4. DEVELOPMENT OF PROTOTYPE TOOLS.**

12 The Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality,
13 in consultation with the Administrator of General Serv-
14 ices, the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Coun-
15 cil, the Chief Information Officers Council, the Director
16 of the Office of Management and Budget, and other rel-
17 evant stakeholders and Federal agencies, shall design,
18 test, and build prototype tools for environmental reviews
19 and authorizations that will assist Federal agencies in im-
20 plementing the minimum functional requirements de-
21 scribed in section 5. The Chair of the Council on Environ-
22 mental Quality shall prioritize designing, testing, and
23 building tools under this section that—

- 24 (1) support authorization case or project man-
- 25 agement systems that manage tasks, milestones, and

activities associated with environmental reviews and authorizations, and provide Federal agencies more data and insight into such reviews and authorizations;

(2) enable—

(A) application submission and tracking portals used by project sponsors, enabling greater transparency; and

(B) public comment opportunity tracking portals to increase transparency;

(3) facilitate automated applications, environmental reviews, and authorizations;

(4) allow data exchange between Federal agency systems; and

(5) accelerate complex environmental reviews.

SEC. 5. PUBLICATION OF GUIDANCE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF DATA STANDARDS AND MINIMUM FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS.

(a) PUBLICATION.—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality shall publish guidance for how each Federal agency responsible for environmental reviews or authorizations implements—

(1) the data standards published under section 3; and

1 (2) the following minimum functional require-
2 ments:

3 (A) Application data sharing that enables
4 automated transfer of relevant environmental
5 review and authorization data among Federal
6 agencies.

7 (B) Automated project screening to assist
8 frontline staff with reviewing project sponsor
9 provided information for completeness and ac-
10 curacy and determining if a categorical exclu-
11 sion or other general authorization applies to an
12 action. Automated project screening may not be
13 used by the Council on Environmental Quality
14 or a Federal agency to unlawfully restrict any
15 activities on Federal lands.

16 (C) Public availability of screening criteria
17 and related decision models.

18 (D) Automated case or project manage-
19 ment tools which include a repository of rel-
20 evant data and metadata that enable advanced
21 tracking, reporting, and optimization to aid
22 workflows.

23 (E) Integrated geographic information sys-
24 tem analysis tools which incorporate geospatial
25 data layers and models for each resource ana-

1 lyzed as part of an environmental review or au-
2 thorization for a given study area.

3 (F) Document management tools that pre-
4 serve metadata associated with geospatial anal-
5 ysis, modeling, and other analytic processes
6 conducted during an environmental review or
7 authorization, to support future reviews and en-
8 able Artificial Intelligence-assisted analysis of
9 past decisions.

10 (G) Automated comment compilation and
11 analysis tools, including services for comment
12 categorization and response that handle the
13 lifecycle of comment submission, analysis, cat-
14 egorization and response with Artificial Intel-
15 ligence support where appropriate.

16 (H) Administrative record management
17 tools that maintain both portable document for-
18 mats and data-rich repositories accessible to
19 both machine and human users.

20 (I) Common or interoperable Federal agen-
21 cy services that integrate shared services,
22 shared applications, and common user experi-
23 ences for Federal agency staff, project sponsors,
24 and the public.

1 (b) INCLUSIONS.—The guidance published under this
2 section shall include the following:

3 (1) Guidelines for cloud-based storage, data
4 sharing protocols, and application programming
5 interfaces to enable the Council on Environmental
6 Quality to work with Federal agencies to use author-
7 ization data to aid Federal agencies in modernizing
8 their environmental reviews and authorizations and
9 for iterative development of the authorization portal.

10 (2) Provisions that support scalability and
11 adaptability of the minimum requirements to emerg-
12 ing technologies.

13 **SEC. 6. IMPLEMENTATION OF DATA STANDARDS AND MIN-**
14 **IMUM FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS.**

15 (a) IMPLEMENTATION.—The head of each Federal
16 agency responsible for environmental reviews or authoriza-
17 tions shall—

18 (1) not later than 90 days after the date of en-
19 actment of this Act—

20 (A) compare existing Federal agency sys-
21 tems for environmental reviews and authoriza-
22 tions under their authority with the data stand-
23 ards published under section 3 and the min-
24 imum functional requirements described in sec-
25 tion 5(a)(2) and report findings from such com-

1 parison to the Council on Environmental Qual-
2 ity;

3 (B) assess whether existing Federal agency
4 technological capabilities are consistent with the
5 data standards published under section 3 and
6 the minimum functional requirements described
7 in section 5(a)(2);

8 (C) submit to the Council on Environ-
9 mental Quality a report that estimates the com-
10 pletion dates for implementing the data stand-
11 ards published under section 3 and the min-
12 imum functional requirements described in sec-
13 tion 5(a)(2); and

14 (D) submit to the Council on Environ-
15 mental Quality, in consultation with the Council
16 on Environmental Quality, an implementation
17 plan that—

18 (i) describes how the Federal agency
19 will implement the data standards pub-
20 lished under section 3 and the minimum
21 functional requirements described in sec-
22 tion 5(a)(2); and

23 (ii) describes how, to the extent the
24 Federal agency determines necessary to
25 meet relevant statutory requirements, the

1 Federal agency will adopt or implement
2 the prototype tools tested, designed, and
3 built under section 4; and

4 (2) not later than 180 days after the date of
5 enactment of this Act, begin implementing the data
6 standards published under section 3 and the min-
7 imum functional requirements described in section
8 5(a)(2).

9 (b) REPORT.—Not less frequently than twice each
10 year, the Chief Information Officer of each Federal agen-
11 cy, in consultation with the Chief Environmental Review
12 and Permitting Officer of each Federal agency, shall sub-
13 mit to the Council on Environmental Quality and the Di-
14 rector of the Office of Management and Budget a report
15 on the progress of the Federal agency towards meeting
16 the requirements of subsection (a).

17 **SEC. 7. UNIFIED INTERAGENCY DATA SYSTEM.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—

19 (1) UNIFIED INTERAGENCY DATA SYSTEM.—To
20 the maximum extent practicable, the Chair of the
21 Council of Environmental Quality and the head of
22 each Federal agency responsible for environmental
23 reviews or authorizations shall iteratively develop
24 and maintain a unified interagency data system con-
25 sisting of interconnected Federal agency systems

1 and shared services for environmental reviews and
2 authorizations.

3 (2) AUTHORIZATION PORTAL.—

4 (A) IN GENERAL.—The shared services de-
5 veloped and maintained under paragraph (1)
6 shall include a common interactive, digital,
7 cloud-based authorization portal, which shall—

8 (i) be designed in a manner consistent
9 with—

10 (I) the recommendations of the
11 Council on Environmental Quality in-
12 cluded in the study submitted pursu-
13 ant to section 110 of the National En-
14 vironmental Policy Act of 1969 (42
15 U.S.C. 4336d) titled “Council on En-
16 vironmental Quality Report to Con-
17 gress on the Potential for Online and
18 Digital Technologies to Address
19 Delays in Reviews and Improve Public
20 Accessibility and Transparency under
21 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)”;

22 (II) the minimum functional re-
23 quirements described in section
24 5(a)(2);

1 (ii) serve as a platform for tracking
2 and displaying real-time data on environ-
3 mental reviews and authorizations made
4 available through application programming
5 interfaces or other reporting mechanisms
6 from Federal agency systems that are com-
7 pliant with the data standards and data
8 architecture described in this Act;

9 (iii) be supported by a decentralized,
10 cross-network digital infrastructure soft-
11 ware that ensures vendor neutrality and
12 interoperability of data and models across
13 Federal agencies;

14 (iv) include a mechanism for the dis-
15 semination of relevant information (such
16 as a notice of intent for public comment,
17 public meetings, project statuses, or a no-
18 tice of intent to begin an environmental re-
19 view) to local communities, as applicable;

20 (v) allow a project sponsor to submit
21 all necessary documentation for environ-
22 mental reviews and authorizations in one
23 unified and secure portal;

24 (vi) support interactive, digital, and
25 cloud-based tools enabling applicants to

1 edit documents and collaborate with rel-
2 evant Federal agencies in real time;

3 (vii) support visual features, including
4 video, animation, geographic information
5 system displays, interactive maps, and
6 three-dimensional renderings;

7 (viii) provide for the exchange of in-
8 formation to and from Federal agency data
9 systems via an application programming
10 interface or another reporting mechanisms;

11 (ix) allow for the submission of
12 geospatial data associated with project lo-
13 cation, footprint, and impact;

14 (x) support automatic documentation
15 of submission and process timelines; and

16 (xi) allow the following metrics to be
17 tracked over time—

18 (I) estimates of achieved effi-
19 ciencies, such as reductions in the
20 time between receipt of applications
21 and final authorization decisions;

22 (II) comparisons of authorization
23 timelines before and after the imple-
24 mentation of this Act;

1 (III) usage of the authorization
2 portal and other statistics from the
3 Digital Analytics Program;

4 (IV) metrics on the number of
5 public comments received, responses
6 provided, and community meetings
7 held;

8 (V) the number of projects sub-
9 ject to litigation based on authoriza-
10 tion deficiencies or inefficiencies;

11 (VI) a list of Federal agencies
12 that are not yet fully compliant with
13 the data standards published under
14 section 3 and the minimum functional
15 requirements described in section
16 5(a)(2), along with their progress to-
17 ward compliance; and

18 (VII) examples or repositories of
19 Federal agency-developed digital
20 workflows enabled by the implementa-
21 tion of this Act, including visualiza-
22 tions of data sharing, authorizations
23 and decision logic, and environmental
24 reviews.

1 (B) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.—The Ad-
2 ministrator of General Services shall host the
3 authorization portal as a shared service for
4 Congress, Federal agencies, and the public.

5 (C) ACCESSABILITY.—The authorization
6 portal shall be accessible to Congress, Federal
7 agencies, and the public, with appropriate safe-
8 guards to protect sensitive or classified informa-
9 tion and information restricted by user type as
10 appropriate.

11 (D) PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY.—To the ex-
12 tent practicable and consistent with other law,
13 the authorization portal shall provide public ac-
14 cess to non-sensitive data, including authoriza-
15 tion timelines, location, project type, environ-
16 mental reviews, and mitigation measures.

17 (E) CONGRESSIONAL ACCESS AND OVER-
18 SIGHT.—

19 (i) IN GENERAL.—The authorization
20 portal shall provide Congress with direct
21 access to aggregated performance data and
22 other analytics to enable real-time over-
23 sight of Federal agencies.

24 (ii) ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SUP-
25 PORT SYSTEMS AND TRAINING MATE-

1 RIALS.—Congress shall have access to the
2 data, fine-tuning procedures, and prompt
3 configurations specifically created or
4 adapted for Artificial Intelligence systems
5 used to support environmental review or
6 authorization activities, excluding propri-
7 etary or general pretraining materials un-
8 related to such agency-specific
9 customization.

10 (iii) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The
11 Council on Environmental Quality shall
12 provide to Congress technical assistance
13 upon request to ensure effective use of the
14 authorization portal and Artificial Intel-
15 ligence systems for oversight purposes.

16 (3) CYBERSECURITY AND COMPLIANCE CONSID-
17 ERATIONS.—The authorization portal shall be de-
18 signed to promote vendor neutral interoperability,
19 reduce redundancy, and ensure compliance and co-
20 ordination with other laws, including—

21 (A) section 552a of title 5, United States
22 Code (commonly referred to as the Privacy Act
23 of 1974), and subchapter II of chapter 35 of
24 title 44, United States Code;

1 (B) the Federal Risk and Authorization
2 Management Program established under section
3 3608 of title 44, United States Code; and

4 (C) the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure
5 Security Agency of the Department of Home-
6 land Security, for a case in which the project is
7 in coordination with a Federal agency with
8 stringent security requirements.

9 (b) DEADLINES.—

10 (1) SHARED SERVICES PILOT.—Not later than
11 one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the
12 Council on Environmental Quality shall oversee pi-
13 loting of shared services for environmental reviews
14 and authorizations, including the authorization por-
15 tal under subsection (a)(2).

16 (2) UNIFIED SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT AND IM-
17 PLEMENTATION.—To the maximum extent prac-
18 ticable, not later than December 1, 2027, the Chair
19 of the Council on Environmental Quality shall de-
20 velop and implement the unified interagency data
21 system required under subsection (a)(1).

22 (c) REPORT.—Not less frequently than annually, the
23 Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality, in con-
24 sultation with the Federal Permitting Improvement Steer-
25 ing Council, the Chief Information Officers Council, and

1 other relevant stakeholders and Federal agencies, shall
2 submit to the Committee on Natural Resources of the
3 House of Representatives and the Committee on Environ-
4 ment and Public Works of the Senate a report on the
5 Council on Environmental Quality's progress on devel-
6 oping a unified interagency data system under subsection
7 (a).

8 **SEC. 8. AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTS.**

9 Subject to the availability of appropriations, the
10 Council on Environmental Quality may enter into con-
11 tracts and other arrangements for analyses, services, and
12 products with Federal agencies, private organizations, and
13 businesses, and make such payments as determined nec-
14 essary by the Council on Environmental Quality to carry
15 out the provisions of this Act.

16 **SEC. 9. CLARIFYING RULEMAKING AUTHORITY.**

17 Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize
18 the Council on Environmental Quality or a Federal agency
19 to impose additional regulatory processes or requirements
20 beyond those expressly stipulated under the National En-
21 vironmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.)
22 or any other law.

23 **SEC. 10. SAVINGS CLAUSE.**

24 To the extent that a data system, technology, or tool
25 developed or incorporated into a unified interagency data

1 system under this Act is not limited by project type, the
2 data system, technology, or tool shall not have its use be
3 restricted by project type.

4 **SEC. 11. DEFINITIONS.**

5 In this Act:

6 (1) **AUTHORIZATION.**—The term “authoriza-
7 tion” means any license, permit, approval, finding,
8 determination, or other administrative decision
9 issued by an agency and any interagency consulta-
10 tion that is required or authorized under Federal
11 law in order to site, construct, reconstruct, or com-
12 mence operations of a project administered by a
13 Federal agency.

14 (2) **AUTHORIZATION DATA.**—The term “author-
15 ization data” means—

16 (A) any data relevant for a Federal agency
17 to—

18 (i) determine the effect on the envi-
19 ronment of an action for which an author-
20 ization is required by the Federal agency;
21 and

22 (ii) determine whether to issue such
23 authorization; and

24 (B) any community input or public com-
25 ment on such determinations.

1 (3) DATA ARCHITECTURE.—The term “data ar-
2 chitecture” means the design and organization of
3 data systems, including frameworks for data storage,
4 processing, and exchange.

5 (4) DATA STANDARDS.—The term “data stand-
6 ards” means agreed-upon specifications for data for-
7 mats, structures, and definitions to ensure consist-
8 ency and vendor neutral interoperability.

9 (5) ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW.—The term “en-
10 vironmental review” means any Federal agency pro-
11 cedures or processes for—

12 (A) applying a categorical exclusion; or

13 (B) preparing an environmental assess-
14 ment, an environmental impact statement, or
15 another document required under the National
16 Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C.
17 4321 et seq.).

18 (6) FEDERAL AGENCY.—The term “Federal
19 agency” has the meaning given the term “agency”
20 in section 551 of title 5, United States Code.

21 (7) FEDERAL PERMITTING IMPROVEMENT
22 STEERING COUNCIL.—The term “Federal Permitting
23 Improvement Steering Council” has the meaning

1 given the term “Council” in section 41001 of the
2 FAST Act (42 U.S.C. 4370m).

Passed the House of Representatives December 9,
2025.

Attest:

Clerk.

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