

Union Calendar No. 341

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4503

[Report No. 119–392]

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

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 17, 2025

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota (for himself and Mr. PETERS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

DECEMBER 4, 2025

Additional sponsors: Mr. CRANK, Mr. MAGAZINER, Mr. EVANS of Colorado, Mr. GRAY, Mr. CALVERT, Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas, Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia, Mr. AUCHINCLOSS, Mr. HURD of Colorado, and Mr. VINDMAN

DECEMBER 4, 2025

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on July 17, 2025]

A BILL

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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 *This Act may be cited as the “ePermit Act”.*

5 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

6 *The Congress finds that—*

7 (1) *coordination between Federal, State, and*
8 *local agencies and project sponsors is critical to en-*
9 *sureing the timely and effective completion of environ-*
10 *mental reviews and authorizations, including through*
11 *the sharing of relevant information, alignment of en-*
12 *vironmental review timelines, and integration of au-*
13 *thorizations, while maintaining compliance with ap-*
14 *plicable statutory and regulatory requirements;*

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

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

1 (4) *Federal agency use of modern software that*
2 *can track the full lifecycle of environmental reviews*
3 *and authorizations is critical for—*

4 (A) *effective project management and proc-*
5 *ess improvement;*

6 (B) *enabling workflow automation, trans-*
7 *parency, and tracking; and*

8 (C) *simplifying reporting requirements;*

9 (5) *modern business process management systems*
10 *that track Federal agency workflows and produce ven-*
11 *дор neutral, interoperable event, task, and other mile-*
12 *stone data that can be shared with other Federal*
13 *agency systems can reduce costs and improve per-*
14 *formance for Federal agencies responsible for environ-*
15 *mental reviews and authorizations;*

16 (6) *case and project management systems—*

17 (A) *are essential tools for managing the*
18 *tasks and activities associated with environ-*
19 *mental reviews and authorizations; and*

20 (B) *provide Federal agencies more data and*
21 *insight into such environmental reviews and au-*
22 *thorizations;*

23 (7) *well-defined business rules can enable process*
24 *automation that allows Federal agencies responsible*
25 *for environmental reviews or authorizations to expe-*

1 *dite routine tasks and workflows, and improve trans-*
2 *parency and accuracy of project timeline estimates,*
3 *which in turn can help project sponsors better plan*
4 *for application preparation and project delivery mile-*
5 *stones;*

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

16 *(9) Federal agencies responsible for environ-*
17 *mental reviews or authorizations, project sponsors,*
18 *and the public should have access to up-to-date infor-*
19 *mation on accurate timelines and the status of envi-*
20 *ronmental reviews and authorizations; and*

21 *(10) allowing for seamless information exchange*
22 *among Federal agencies and between Federal agencies*
23 *and project sponsors will increase predictability and*
24 *efficiency of environmental review and authorization*
25 *schedules for project sponsors.*

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

2 (a) *IN GENERAL.*—Not later than 60 days after the
3 date of enactment of this Act, the Chair of the Council on
4 Environmental Quality, in consultation with the Federal
5 Permitting Improvement Steering Council, the Chief Infor-
6 mation Officers Council, the Office of Management and
7 Budget, and other relevant stakeholders and Federal agen-
8 cies, shall develop, publish, and iteratively update data
9 standards for the collection and curation of authorization
10 data by Federal agencies, which shall be used to—

11 (1) *assist with environmental reviews and au-*
12 *thorizations;*

13 (2) *organize, define, and standardize various*
14 *concepts, formats, and protocols that are included in*
15 *environmental reviews and authorizations; and*

16 (3) *reduce the need for redundant environmental*
17 *reviews by creating a shared vocabulary and software*
18 *systems that will support vendor neutrality, data*
19 *interoperability, workflow automation, and automatic*
20 *data exchange between Federal agencies.*

21 (b) *INCLUSIONS.*—The data standards developed, pub-
22 lished, and iteratively updated under subsection (a) shall
23 include the following:

24 (1) *A standardized taxonomy that allows Federal*
25 *agencies to identify and track data types, relation-*
26 *ships, and values.*

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

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

13 *The Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality,*
 14 *in consultation with the Administrator of General Services,*
 15 *the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council, the*
 16 *Chief Information Officers Council, the Director of the Of-*
 17 *fice of Management and Budget, and other relevant stake-*
 18 *holders and Federal agencies, shall design, test, and build*
 19 *prototype tools for environmental reviews and authoriza-*
 20 *tions that will assist Federal agencies in implementing the*
 21 *minimum functional requirements described in section 5.*
 22 *The Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality shall*
 23 *prioritize designing, testing, and building tools under this*
 24 *section that—*

1 (1) *support authorization case or project man-*
 2 *agement systems that manage tasks, milestones, and*
 3 *activities associated with environmental reviews and*
 4 *authorizations, and provide Federal agencies more*
 5 *data and insight into such reviews and authoriza-*
 6 *tions;*

7 (2) *enable—*

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

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

13 (3) *facilitate automated applications, environ-*
 14 *mental reviews, and authorizations;*

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

17 (5) *accelerate complex environmental reviews.*

18 **SEC. 5. PUBLICATION OF GUIDANCE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**
 19 **OF DATA STANDARDS AND MINIMUM FUNC-**
 20 **TIONAL REQUIREMENTS.**

21 (a) *PUBLICATION.*—*Not later than 120 days after the*
 22 *date of enactment of this Act, the Chair of the Council on*
 23 *Environmental Quality shall publish guidance for how each*
 24 *Federal agency responsible for environmental reviews or au-*
 25 *thorizations implements—*

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

3 (2) *the following minimum functional require-*
4 *ments:*

5 (A) *Application data sharing that enables*
6 *automated transfer of relevant environmental re-*
7 *view and authorization data among Federal*
8 *agencies.*

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

18 (C) *Public availability of screening criteria*
19 *and related decision models.*

20 (D) *Automated case or project management*
21 *tools which include a repository of relevant data*
22 *and metadata that enable advanced tracking, re-*
23 *porting, and optimization to aid workflows.*

24 (E) *Integrated geographic information sys-*
25 *tem analysis tools which incorporate geospatial*

1 *data layers and models for each resource ana-*
2 *lyzed as part of an environmental review or au-*
3 *thorization for a given study area.*

4 *(F) Document management tools that pre-*
5 *serve metadata associated with geospatial anal-*
6 *ysis, modeling, and other analytic processes con-*
7 *ducted during an environmental review or au-*
8 *thorization, to support future reviews and enable*
9 *Artificial Intelligence-assisted analysis of past*
10 *decisions.*

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

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

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

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

3 (1) *Guidelines for cloud-based storage, data shar-*
4 *ing protocols, and application programming inter-*
5 *faces to enable the Council on Environmental Quality*
6 *to work with Federal agencies to use authorization*
7 *data to aid Federal agencies in modernizing their en-*
8 *vironmental reviews and authorizations and for*
9 *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 section*
22 *5(a)(2); and*

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

1 agency will adopt or implement the proto-
 2 type tools tested, designed, and built under
 3 section 4; and

4 (2) not later than 180 days after the date of en-
 5 actment 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 year,
 10 the Chief Information Officer of each Federal agency, in
 11 consultation with the Chief Environmental Review and
 12 Permitting Officer of each Federal agency, shall submit to
 13 the Council on Environmental Quality and the Director of
 14 the Office of Management and Budget a report on the
 15 progress of the Federal agency towards meeting the require-
 16 ments 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 re-
 23 views or authorizations shall iteratively develop and
 24 maintain a unified interagency data system con-
 25 sisting of interconnected Federal agency systems and

1 *shared services for environmental reviews and author-*
2 *izations.*

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 pursuant*
13 *to section 110 of the National Environ-*
14 *mental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C.*
15 *4336d) titled “Council on Environ-*
16 *mental Quality Report to Congress on*
17 *the Potential for Online and Digital*
18 *Technologies to Address Delays in Re-*
19 *views and Improve Public Accessibility*
20 *and Transparency under 42 U.S.C.*
21 *4332(2)(C)”;* and

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

24 (ii) *serve as a platform for tracking*
25 *and displaying real-time data on environ-*

1 *mental reviews and authorizations made*
2 *available through application programming*
3 *interfaces or other reporting mechanisms*
4 *from Federal agency systems that are com-*
5 *pliant with the data standards and data*
6 *architecture described in this Act;*

7 *(iii) be supported by a decentralized,*
8 *cross-network digital infrastructure software*
9 *that ensures vendor neutrality and inter-*
10 *operability of data and models across Fed-*
11 *eral agencies;*

12 *(iv) include a mechanism for the dis-*
13 *semination of relevant information (such as*
14 *a notice of intent for public comment, pub-*
15 *lic meetings, project statuses, or a notice of*
16 *intent to begin an environmental review) to*
17 *local communities, as applicable;*

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

22 *(vi) support interactive, digital, and*
23 *cloud-based tools enabling applicants to edit*
24 *documents and collaborate with relevant*
25 *Federal agencies in real time;*

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

5 (viii) provide for the exchange of infor-
6 mation to and from Federal agency data
7 systems via an application programming
8 interface or another reporting mechanisms;

9 (ix) allow for the submission of
10 geospatial data associated with project loca-
11 tion, footprint, and impact;

12 (x) support automatic documentation
13 of submission and process timelines; and

14 (xi) allow the following metrics to be
15 tracked over time—

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

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

23 (III) usage of the authorization
24 portal and other statistics from the
25 Digital Analytics Program;

1 (IV) *metrics on the number of*
2 *public comments received, responses*
3 *provided, and community meetings*
4 *held;*

5 (V) *the number of projects subject*
6 *to litigation based on authorization de-*
7 *ficiencies or inefficiencies;*

8 (VI) *a list of Federal agencies that*
9 *are not yet fully compliant with the*
10 *data standards published under section*
11 *3 and the minimum functional re-*
12 *quirements described in section 5(a)(2),*
13 *along with their progress toward com-*
14 *pliance; and*

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

22 (B) *ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.—The Ad-*
23 *ministrator of General Services shall host the au-*
24 *thorization portal as a shared service for Con-*
25 *gress, Federal agencies, and the public.*

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

7 (D) *PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY.*—*To the extent*
8 *practicable and consistent with other law, the*
9 *authorization portal shall provide public access*
10 *to non-sensitive data, including authorization*
11 *timelines, location, project type, environmental*
12 *reviews, and mitigation measures.*

13 (E) *CONGRESSIONAL ACCESS AND OVER-*
14 *SIGHT.*—

15 (i) *IN GENERAL.*—*The authorization*
16 *portal shall provide Congress with direct ac-*
17 *cess to aggregated performance data and*
18 *other analytics to enable real-time oversight*
19 *of Federal agencies.*

20 (ii) *ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SUP-*
21 *PORT SYSTEMS AND TRAINING MATE-*
22 *RIALS.*—*Congress shall have access to the*
23 *data, fine-tuning procedures, and prompt*
24 *configurations specifically created or adapt-*
25 *ed for Artificial Intelligence systems used to*

1 support environmental review or authoriza-
2 tion activities, excluding proprietary or
3 general pretraining materials unrelated to
4 such agency-specific customization.

5 (iii) *TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.*—The
6 Council on Environmental Quality shall
7 provide to Congress technical assistance
8 upon request to ensure effective use of the
9 authorization portal and Artificial Intel-
10 ligence systems for oversight purposes.

11 (3) *CYBERSECURITY AND COMPLIANCE CONSID-*
12 *ERATIONS.*—The authorization portal shall be de-
13 signed to promote vendor neutral interoperability, re-
14 duce redundancy, and ensure compliance and coordi-
15 nation with other laws, including—

16 (A) section 552a of title 5, United States
17 Code (commonly referred to as the Privacy Act
18 of 1974), and subchapter II of chapter 35 of title
19 44, United States Code;

20 (B) the Federal Risk and Authorization
21 Management Program established under section
22 3608 of title 44, United States Code; and

23 (C) the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure
24 Security Agency of the Department of Homeland
25 Security, for a case in which the project is in co-

1 *ordination with a Federal agency with stringent*
2 *security requirements.*

3 *(b) DEADLINES.—*

4 *(1) SHARED SERVICES PILOT.—Not later than*
5 *one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the*
6 *Council on Environmental Quality shall oversee pilot-*
7 *ing of shared services for environmental reviews and*
8 *authorizations, including the authorization portal*
9 *under subsection (a)(2).*

10 *(2) UNIFIED SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLE-*
11 *MENTATION.—To the maximum extent practicable,*
12 *not later than December 1, 2027, the Chair of the*
13 *Council on Environmental Quality shall develop and*
14 *implement the unified interagency data system re-*
15 *quired under subsection (a)(1).*

16 *(c) REPORT.—Not less frequently than annually, the*
17 *Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality, in con-*
18 *sultation with the Federal Permitting Improvement Steer-*
19 *ing Council, the Chief Information Officers Council, and*
20 *other relevant stakeholders and Federal agencies, shall sub-*
21 *mit to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House*
22 *of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and*
23 *Public Works of the Senate a report on the Council on Envi-*
24 *ronmental Quality’s progress on developing a unified inter-*
25 *agency data system under subsection (a).*

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

2 *The Council on Environmental Quality may enter into*
3 *contracts and other arrangements for analyses, services, and*
4 *products with Federal agencies, private organizations, and*
5 *businesses, and make such payments as determined nec-*
6 *essary by the Council on Environmental Quality to carry*
7 *out the provisions of this Act.*

8 **SEC. 9. CLARIFYING RULEMAKING AUTHORITY.**

9 *Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize the*
10 *Council on Environmental Quality or a Federal agency to*
11 *impose additional regulatory processes or requirements be-*
12 *yond those expressly stipulated under the National Envi-*
13 *ronmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) or*
14 *any other law.*

15 **SEC. 10. SAVINGS CLAUSE.**

16 *To the extent that a data system, technology, or tool*
17 *developed or incorporated into a unified interagency data*
18 *system under this Act is not limited by project type, the*
19 *data system, technology, or tool shall not have its use be*
20 *restricted by project type.*

21 **SEC. 11. DEFINITIONS.**

22 *In this Act:*

23 (1) *AUTHORIZATION.—The term “authorization”*
24 *means any license, permit, approval, finding, deter-*
25 *mination, or other administrative decision issued by*
26 *an agency and any interagency consultation that is*

1 *required or authorized under Federal law in order to*
2 *site, construct, reconstruct, or commence operations of*
3 *a project administered by a Federal agency.*

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

6 (A) *any data relevant for a Federal agency*
7 *to—*

8 (i) *determine the effect on the environ-*
9 *ment of an action for which an authoriza-*
10 *tion is required by the Federal agency; and*

11 (ii) *determine whether to issue such*
12 *authorization; and*

13 (B) *any community input or public com-*
14 *ment on such determinations.*

15 (3) *DATA ARCHITECTURE.*—*The term “data ar-*
16 *chitecture” means the design and organization of data*
17 *systems, including frameworks for data storage, proc-*
18 *essing, and exchange.*

19 (4) *DATA STANDARDS.*—*The term “data stand-*
20 *ards” means agreed-upon specifications for data for-*
21 *mats, structures, and definitions to ensure consistency*
22 *and vendor neutral interoperability.*

23 (5) *ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW.*—*The term “envi-*
24 *ronmental review” means any Federal agency proce-*
25 *dures or processes for—*

1 (A) *applying a categorical exclusion; or*

2 (B) *preparing an environmental assess-*
3 *ment, an environmental impact statement, or*
4 *another document required under the National*
5 *Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C.*
6 *4321 et seq.).*

7 (6) *FEDERAL AGENCY.—The term “Federal agen-*
8 *cy” has the meaning given the term “agency” in sec-*
9 *tion 551 of title 5, United States Code.*

10 (7) *FEDERAL PERMITTING IMPROVEMENT STEER-*
11 *ING COUNCIL.—The term “Federal Permitting Im-*
12 *provement Steering Council” has the meaning given*
13 *the term “Council” in section 41001 of the FAST Act*
14 *(42 U.S.C. 4370m).*

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A BILL

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

DECEMBER 4, 2025

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed