



STATE of MINNESOTA

Executive Department

Governor Tim Walz

Executive Order 26-03

Protecting Minnesota's Environment and Health and Supporting Economic Opportunity through Permitting Reform

I, Tim Walz, Governor of the State of Minnesota, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and applicable statutes, issue the following Executive Order.

Today's economy requires timely and transparent environmental permitting to meet the needs of the residents, workers, and businesses of Minnesota. That's why my administration is focused on ensuring state government has efficient and transparent processes that protect our communities' health and our state's natural resources while promoting economic growth for both workers and businesses.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency ("MPCA") manages more than 28,000 air, water, and land permits at 22,500 sites across the state as part of our collective commitment to ensuring Minnesotans have clean air, land, and water. Minnesotans expect that we protect the environment and realize sustainable economic growth and opportunity. We can do both.

We have already made great strides to improve permitting processes and reduce timelines. I have signed legislation that has streamlined permit application timelines and clarified environmental review, which are some of the most significant permitting reforms of the last fifty years. I also signed legislation requiring that state agencies establish project plans to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accountability. These changes have improved timeliness while keeping strong environmental standards that continue to make Minnesota the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

Still, we must do more. Meeting the transformational clean economy goals of the Minnesota Climate Action Framework and continuing to create family-supporting jobs in Minnesota requires our continued development of more efficient and predictable permitting systems for businesses and residents in our state.

For these reasons, I order as follows:

1. MPCA will:
 - a. Employ a two-stage air permitting process to qualifying projects pursuant to its authority in Minn. Rules 7007.0750 subp. 7 by March 1, 2026.

- b. Launch an initiative to reduce permitting timelines for the air, water, and land permits it issues by March 31, 2026. This project will:
 - i. Review the permitting efficiency goals in Minnesota Statutes 116.03, subdivision 2b and either affirm those goals or work with others to suggest new goals;
 - ii. Incorporate permitting efficiency goals and corresponding strategies in the agency's 2024 - 2028 strategic plan;
 - iii. Modernize the permitting application process, with a focus on customer experience, by moving permit applications to online, web-based formats, and publishing a schedule for when this will occur;
 - iv. Pilot artificial intelligence to find innovative ways to improve permitting timelines;
 - v. Regularly engage Minnesota businesses and communities via the creation of a permitting efficiency technical advisory group to help develop strategies to reduce permitting timelines;
 - vi. Develop tools for Minnesota businesses and the Minnesota Business First Stop ("MBFS") to clearly articulate Minnesota's environmental permitting process and potential permitting timelines; and
 - vii. Provide an annual progress report to the Governor's office by October 1, 2026.
- c. Update and enhance the Permit Application Tracker currently available on the agency website so that anyone may track the status of open permit applications by April 1, 2026. The Permit Application Tracker should be regularly updated and continuously improved to meet the expectations of Minnesota's businesses and residents.
- d. Annually release a list of environmental consultants that have successfully submitted complete permit applications on behalf of their clients at least 80% of the time.

2. The Department of Employment and Economic Development, through MBFS and with support of MBFS members, will:

- a. Convene at least two MBFS meetings per year focused on Minnesota's overall regulatory environment and how Minnesota can improve customer experience for project proposers seeking environmental permits.
- b. Submit a report to the Governor's office by December 1, 2026 that outlines:
 - i. Areas of concerns from businesses seeking environmental permits;
 - ii. Initiatives other states have undertaken to improve permitting efficiency;
 - iii. Emerging industries and potential gaps in the current environmental permitting process that may pose a barrier for recruiting innovative and clean technologies to Minnesota; and

- iv. Recommendations for reducing permitting timelines and improving customer experience.

This Executive Order is effective fifteen days after publication in the State Register and filing with the Secretary of State. It will remain in effect until rescinded by proper authority or until it expires in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 2025, section 4.035, subd. 3.

A determination that any provision of this Executive Order is invalid will not affect the enforceability of any other provision of this Executive Order. Rather, the invalid provision will be modified to the extent necessary so that it is enforceable.

Signed on February 13, 2026



Tim Walz, GOVERNOR

Filed According to Law:



Steve Simon, SECRETARY OF STATE

Filed February 13, 2026
Office of the Minnesota
Secretary of State
Steve Simon