



Reforming Minnesota's environmental permitting system:

Balancing environmental integrity and economic growth

The Environmental Permitting Reform coalition is comprised of business, labor and community organizations committed to streamlining Minnesota's permitting process while protecting our state's cherished natural resources.

The coalition's legislative proposal includes recommendations to:

- Enhance efficiency and transparency with:
 - Greater reporting and more clarity;
 - Separating industrial and municipal permit data;
 - Enhancing permit "completeness" processes; and more
- Reduce unlimited 60-day wetland permit extensions to one extension
- Separate operating and construction permits
- Allow applicants to request and pay for expedited permitting
- Limit citizen petitions to the project county, and adjoining counties
- Direct Commissioner review of permits that do not meet the 150-day goal
- Direct DEED to appoint a permitting "ombudsman" to facilitate the process
- A scoping Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) is not required for projects with a mandatory Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

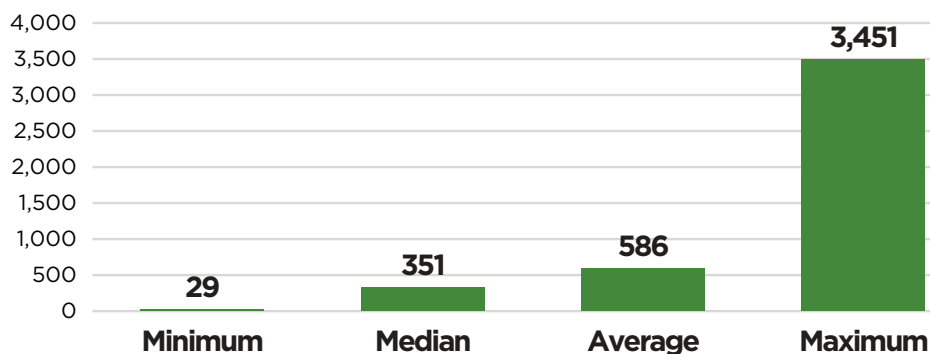
The economic imperative for reform

The Minnesota Chamber Foundation released a data-driven, scientific report in February of 2024, *Streamlining Minnesota's environmental permitting process: Essential for economic growth*. The five-year analysis provides a strong sample size and compares Minnesota's review times and processes to other states. The report details the state's ability to update the state's environmental permitting process while maintaining the business community's strong commitment to high environmental standards – the protection of public health, natural resources and the environment.

Minnesota is falling behind. According to data from Grow Minnesota!, Minnesota trails other states and is failing to attract as much investment in-state as it is sending out of state. Minnesota ranked 8th among the 12 states in the Midwest in total project activity from 2018-2023 and consistently ranks between 8th to 12th in projects per capita within the region.

Median timeline to issue priority Tier 2 air permits is 351 days, with the average being 586 days

Number of days to issue priority Tier 2 air permits in Minnesota:
January 2018-September 2023



From 2018-2023, Minnesota-based companies invested in 355 projects in locations outside the state, resulting in an estimated \$17.5 billion in capital expenditures and 31,255 jobs created. In comparison, Minnesota received 210 projects from out-of-state companies, totaling \$12.7 billion and 20,914 jobs created locally. This shows continued net deficits in incoming and outgoing business investments.

Key findings

- Minnesota’s air permitting review times are **1.5 to 6 times longer than the other states** evaluated in the study.
- **Only three of 15 individual water permits** (NPDES/SDS) were issued within the MPCA’s own 150-day goal over a five-year period.
- The average length of time to issue expired but still in effect permits is **6.5 years. The longest is more than 23 years.**
- **Minnesota could gain an additional \$260 million to \$910 million** in economic activity if the state’s permitting review times matched those of the comparison states.

Environmental permitting reform is not a partisan issue. It is not a choice of economic growth or environmental protection. We can invest in our economy and maintain some of the highest environmental standards in the world. Streamlining the state’s permitting process, creating greater transparency and urgency is imperative for Minnesota’s economic future.



AFL-CIO
 ALLETE/MN Power
 APEX
 AgriGrowth
 Albert Lea Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce
 Alexandria Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce
 Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce
 Apple Valley Chamber of Commerce
 Associated Builders and Contractors
 Associated General Contractors – MN/ND Chapter
 Austin Area Chamber of Commerce
 Bemidji Chamber of Commerce
 Brainerd Lakes Chamber
 Builders Association of Minnesota
 Burnsville Chamber of Commerce
 Cloquet Chamber of Commerce
 Cottage Grove Area Chamber of Commerce
 Cuyuna Lakes Chamber of Commerce
 Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce
 Detroit Lakes Regional Chamber of Commerce
 Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce
 East Grand Forks/Grand Forks Chamber of Commerce
 Eden Prairie Chamber of Commerce
 Elk River Area Chamber of Commerce
 Fairmont Area Chamber of Commerce
 Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce
 Faribault Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism
 Fergus Falls Area Chamber of Commerce
 Glenwood Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce

Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
 Greater Mankato Growth
 Greater Stillwater Chamber of Commerce
 Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bureau
 Hermantown Area Chamber of Commerce
 Hibbing Area Chamber of Commerce
 Hutchinson Area Chamber of Commerce
 I-94 West Chamber of Commerce
 Ironworkers Local 512
 International Union of Operating Engineers – Local 49
 International Falls Chamber of Commerce
 Jobs for Minnesotans
 LIUNA
 Lake City Chamber of Commerce
 Lake County Chamber of Commerce
 Lakeville Area Chamber of Commerce & CVB
 Laurentian Chamber of Commerce
 Litchfield Chamber of Commerce
 Lonsdale Chamber of Commerce
 Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce
 MetroNorth Chamber of Commerce
 Midwest Food Products Association (MWPA)
 Minnesota Bio-Fuels Association
 Minnesota Chamber of Commerce
 Minnesota Corn Growers Association
 Minnesota Farm Bureau
 Minnesota Forest Industries
 Minnesota Milk Producers Association

Minnesota Soybean Growers Association
 MiningMinnesota
 New Prague Chamber of Commerce
 New Ulm Area Chamber of Commerce
 North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters
 Northfield Area Chamber of Commerce
 Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism
 Park Rapids Lakes Area Chamber and Tourism
 Pipestone Area Chamber of Commerce
 Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS)
 Red Wing Area Chamber of Commerce
 Redwood Area Chamber and Tourism
 River Heights Chamber of Commerce
 Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce
 Saint Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce
 Sauk Centre Area Chamber of Commerce
 Shakopee Chamber and Visitors Bureau
 Southwest Metro Chamber of Commerce
 St. Paul Area Chamber
 Thief River Falls Chamber of Commerce
 Twin Cities North Chamber of Commerce
 Waconia Chamber of Commerce
 Waseca Chamber of Commerce
 White Bear Area Chamber of Commerce
 Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce
 Winona Area Chamber of Commerce
 Woodbury Area Chamber of Commerce
 Forward Worthington