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# The Permitting Council Update



»» July 17, 2024



Director Beightel  
Official U.S. Senate Photo

Greetings! It's an exciting time at the Permitting Council. Last week, Executive Director Eric Beightel provided testimony before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and showcased the Permitting Council's unique role in bringing innovative solutions and efficiency to the permitting process.

Director Beightel testified on the continued growth and success of the Permitting Council's FAST-41 permitting assistance program, highlighting recent successes including the completion of environmental review and authorizations for several FAST-41 covered projects and the allocation of millions in Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding to support efficient reviews.

### Highlights of Director Beightel's testimony include:

- Project Approvals:** In the past year several FAST-41 projects have completed federal environmental review and authorizations, from the largest offshore wind project in U.S. history, Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind, to billion dollar solar and transmission projects like Sunzia Southwest.
- IRA Investments:** The creation of the Environmental Review Improvement Fund (ERIF) Assistance Program with \$350 million provided by the IRA allowed the Permitting Council to make significant investments over the past year. The Permitting Council allocated \$165 million in funding to federal agencies and an initial \$5 million to Tribes to facilitate more timely and efficient permitting reviews through increased capacity and critically needed resources. Additional funding also awarded \$30 million to federal agencies to fund state-of-the-art environmental review technology.



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- **Notable Firsts:** Fiscal year 2023 featured several firsts for the Permitting Council, including the introduction of the first Tribal and broadband projects on the Federal Permitting Dashboard, the Santa Fe Indian School and the Alaska FiberOptic Project Segment 1. The year also brought the first critical minerals project to FAST-41 coverage, the \$1.7 billion South32 Hermosa project.



*Director Beightel greets Chairman Gary Peters (D-MI)  
Official U.S. Senate Photo*

Director Beightel was honored to testify last week and looks forward to the support of Senate leaders as the Permitting Council works to make the environmental review and authorization process more transparent, predictable and accountable in order to deliver vital infrastructure.

And while Director Beightel was on Capitol Hill to answer important questions on the future of federal permitting, there were some light-hearted moments. The audience included Director Beightel's wife Hillary and her parents, as well as his children Ainsley and Maxwell, who enjoyed speaking with former HSGAC Chairman Senator Tom Carper. They were particularly pleased that their dad testified under oath to buy them Froyo after the hearing.



*Beightel Family  
Official U.S. Senate Photo*

Check out the links below for media coverage of the hearing. A recording is available on the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee [website](#).

E&E News by Politico: [Biden permitting official to testify at Senate hearing](#)

Bloomberg Law: [Senate Democrats Seek to Empower White House Permitting Office](#)

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