National Environmental Policy Act/Environmental Permitting: Council on Environmental Quality Issues Permitting Technology Action Plan

Walter Wright, Jr.
wwright@mwlaw.com
(501) 688.8839

06/03/2025

The Council on Environmental Quality ("CEQ") issued what is titled:

Permitting Technology Action Plan ("PTAP").

The PTAP is stated to have been developed in consultation with the National Energy Dominance Council and relevant permitting agencies.

The stated purpose is to:

…modernize Federal environmental review and permitting processes for infrastructure projects involving roads, bridges, mines, factories, power plants and more.

The PTAP is described as providing a:

...government-wide strategy to optimize technology to effectively and efficiently evaluate environmental permits, allowing for seamless information exchange between agencies, simplified interactions for applicants, and greater transparency and predictability on environmental review and permitting schedules for sponsors and stakeholders.

The PTAP includes the following:

- Minimum functional requirements for environmental review and permitting systems;
- An initial National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and permitting data and technology standard;
- A timeline and implementation roadmap for agencies; and
- A governance structure for implementation.

CEQ states that the PTAP is informed by its E-NEPA Report to Congress required by U.S.C. 4336(d). It describes the Report as including a finding that:

…because agency practice relies often on outdated systems, fragmented data management, and disconnected digital tools, technology has tremendous potential to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of agency NEPA and permitting practices.

The Report to Congress is stated to have recommended:

- Creating common standards for data associated with NEPA processes and documents;

- Developing a common model for how to structure data and design agency systems that will enable sharing of information;
- Supporting agency adoption of shared NEPA tools through iterative development of new and existing software applications; and
- Automating the exchange of data among agency systems to provide a unified experience.

A news release describing the PTAP can be downloaded here.