

PACP Column: September 2024

An abundance of shovel-ready projects and job creation signals a stronger economy. That's why the PA Chamber team successfully advocated to realize our goal of permitting reform in the 2024-25 state budget signed earlier this summer.

Notably, the new Streamlining Permits for Economic Expansion and Development (SPEED) Program improves state permitting processes for several key PA Department of Environmental Protection permits. These reforms will reduce delays in development and business expansion projects – a priority for employers, as delays had long led to projects being shelved, canceled, or lost to other states. The improvements include:

- Allowing employers to work with third-party professionals to facilitate permit application reviews.
- Establishing timeframes with clear accountability measures for permit responses.
- Implementing measures for easier and more transparent tracking of permit applications.

The SPEED program will help streamline the permitting process and make Pennsylvania more competitive. It will also help ensure that newly authorized funding for the PA Strategic Investments to Enhance Sites (SITES) Program is efficiently deployed to successfully prepare business sites for development.

Last year, the PA Chamber led a [coalition](#) of 68 business associations and local chambers in calling on Gov. Shapiro and the legislature to advance permitting reform. And, this year, the PA Chamber joined forces with the state building trades in an [op-ed](#) calling for permitting reform. The permitting reform package signed into law this year includes many of the reforms advocated for by the PA Chamber and its partners.

DEP officials will discuss the implementation timeline for the SPEED program and other energy-related policy items at our upcoming [DEP Quarterly](#) meeting on Wednesday, September 11. These PA Chamber members-only meetings provide critical open forums between DEP officials and the business community to discuss environmental and energy-related issues. You can attend DEP Quarterly either in-person or online by registering [here](#). Not yet a PA Chamber member? [Learn more](#) about how you can lend your voice to the Statewide Voice of Business.

Permitting reform will also highlight the agenda at the [PA Chamber's Annual Environmental Conference](#) on Thursday, October 24, at the Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey. This popular, highly attended event offers an opportunity to network with professionals and exhibitors, learn the latest about energy and environmental policy, and earn continuing education credits. Among the day's many highlights will be a keynote address by EQT President and CEO Toby Rice, who will discuss his role as co-chair of the PA Chamber Foundation's Keystone Initiative, our long-term economic strategy to make Pennsylvania the most competitive state in the nation for business, and our vision for increasing the Commonwealth's position as a leader in clean, reliable, and affordable domestic energy. Panel discussions will explore topics such as grid reliability, permitting reform, and the latest air and water regulations.

As the fall session commences and our [2024 educational and networking events schedule](#) gets even more robust in these final months of the year, we hope you'll consider attending these important events.