

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1959 Session of 2018

INTRODUCED BY ROTHMAN, WALSH, ZIMMERMAN, MILLARD, STEPHENS, FEE, RYAN, WARD, DUSH, METCALFE, GROVE, PHILLIPS-HILL, B. MILLER, STAATS, MENTZER, COX, HELM, WATSON, BERNSTINE, WHEELAND, JAMES, KEEFER, ROAE, GILLEN, NELSON, SCHEMEL, CUTLER, GREINER, KLUNK AND SANKEY, JANUARY 3, 2018

AS AMENDED ON SECOND CONSIDERATION, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, APRIL 30, 2018

AN ACT

1 Providing for the administration of permits by State agencies,  
2 for a tracking system for permit applications, for the  
3 establishment of permit programs and for annual reports.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Permit  
8 Administration Act.

9 Section 2. Definitions.

10 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall  
11 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the  
12 context clearly indicates otherwise:

13 "Applicant." A person, municipality, municipal authority,  
14 political subdivision, State agency or an agency of the Federal  
15 Government which submits an application for a permit to a State  
16 agency.

1 "Application." A submission to a State agency by an  
2 applicant which seeks any of the following:

- 3 (1) A new permit.
- 4 (2) A permit renewal.
- 5 (3) A permit amendment.
- 6 (4) A permit modification.
- 7 (5) A permit transfer.
- 8 (6) A change of ownership of a permit.

9 "Completeness review." The process by which a State agency's  
10 staff reviews an application to determine if the application  
11 satisfies all of the applicable statutory and regulatory  
12 requirements.

13 "Incomplete application." An application which does not  
14 include all required documents and information necessary to  
15 perform a completeness review.

16 "Permit." An authorization issued by a State agency which  
17 approves the performance of a regulated activity. The term  
18 includes authorization permits, plan approvals and registrations  
19 under a general permit. The term does not ~~include~~ a INCLUDE THE <--  
20 FOLLOWING:

21 (1) A certification, license or permit issued to an  
22 individual for personal use.

23 (2) A CERTIFICATION, LICENSE OR PERMIT ISSUED BY THE <--  
24 PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION.

25 "Permit decision." The issuance or denial of a permit.

26 "Permit decision delay." The failure of a State agency to  
27 issue a permit decision within:

- 28 (1) the time period specified by statute or regulation,  
29 including the time period specified under 4 Pa. Code Ch. 7a  
30 Subch. H (relating to permit decision guarantee for the

1 Department of Environmental Protection); or

2 (2) thirty days after the submission of the permit  
3 application if there is no time period specified by statute  
4 or regulation, including 4 Pa. Code Ch. 7a Subch. H.

5 "Permit program." The program designed for the operation and  
6 management of permits which are subject to permit decision  
7 delays.

8 "Processing time." Beginning when the permit satisfies the  
9 completeness review, the total number of business days allowed  
10 by statute, regulation or State agency policy before a State  
11 agency must take final action on a permit decision.

12 "State agency." Any office, department, authority, board or  
13 commission of the executive branch which issues permits.

14 "Technical review." A review of the technical aspects of an  
15 application to determine if the application satisfies all of the  
16 applicable statutory and regulatory requirements for permit  
17 issuance.

18 "Technically deficient application." An application that  
19 does not include all necessary documents and information in  
20 sufficient detail to perform a technical review.

21 "Third-party professional." An individual in this  
22 Commonwealth who possesses all of the requisite certifications  
23 and qualifications of an occupation relating to a permit  
24 administered by a State agency.

25 Section 3. Initial review of permits by State agencies.

26 Within 60 days after the effective date of this act, a State  
27 agency shall review the State agency's permit decisions and  
28 permit decision delays during the immediately preceding calendar  
29 year and submit a report of findings to the General Assembly.

30 Section 4. Compilation of permits.

1 (a) List of permits.--A State agency shall compile, maintain  
2 and make available a complete list of all types of permits  
3 issued by the State agency. The list, including any revisions to  
4 the list, shall be transmitted to the Legislative Reference  
5 Bureau for publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin and shall be  
6 posted on the State agency's publicly accessible Internet  
7 website. The list shall include, but not be limited to, the  
8 following information:

9 (1) The program under which each permit is issued.

10 (2) The statutory and regulatory authority for each  
11 permit.

12 (3) The time frame when the State agency must issue each  
13 permit.

14 (4) The average time frame within which permit is  
15 actually issued.

16 (b) Time limit.--A State agency shall have 90 days from the  
17 effective date of this act to complete the initial list required  
18 under subsection (a).

19 Section 5. Tracking system for permit application.

20 (a) Establishment.--A State agency shall establish, maintain  
21 and make available a secure tracking system for applicants to  
22 track the status of applications on the State agency's publicly  
23 accessible Internet website within 180 days of the effective  
24 date of this section.

25 (b) Notice.--Within five business days after receiving an  
26 application, a State agency shall notify an applicant in writing  
27 or by electronic means of the receipt and provide information  
28 instructing the applicant in the utilization of the tracking  
29 system established under subsection (a).

30 (c) System contents.--The tracking system shall include all

1 of the following:

2 (1) The processing time for each permit and the  
3 statutory and regulatory authority and State agency policy  
4 establishing the processing time.

5 (2) The dates associated with the receipt of each  
6 permit, completeness review, technical review, elevated  
7 review if necessary, and the final permit decision.

8 (3) The estimated time remaining for each incomplete  
9 phase of the permit approval process.

10 (4) The identity and contact information for the State  
11 agency employee assigned to answer questions about the  
12 application process.

13 Section 6. Notice of incomplete and technically deficient  
14 applications.

15 (a) Notice.--If a State agency finds an incomplete  
16 application or technically deficient application, the State  
17 agency shall notify the applicant in writing or by electronic  
18 means of all the following:

19 (1) The statute or regulation which requires a  
20 correction or additional information within the application.

21 (2) The reasons why the application is not in  
22 conformance with the statute or regulation specified under  
23 paragraph (1) IN CLEAR LANGUAGE THAT IS READILY <--  
24 UNDERSTANDABLE BY A LAYPERSON.

25 (3) The correction or additional information needed for  
26 the State agency to issue the permit.

27 (b) Time limit.--The following apply:

28 (1) If an application is determined to be incomplete,  
29 the State agency shall notify the applicant of the  
30 determination within 10 business days of receipt of the

1 application.

2 (2) If an application is determined to be technically  
3 deficient, the State agency shall notify the applicant of the  
4 determination within 20 business days after the conclusion of  
5 a completeness review.

6 Section 7. Notice of permit changes and expiration.

7 A State agency shall notify a permit holder in writing or by  
8 electronic means of the following:

9 (1) The expiration date of a permit 60 days before the  
10 permit's expiration date.

11 (2) A change to a statute or regulation which may affect  
12 the permit.

13 (3) A change in permit fees which may affect the renewal  
14 of the permit.

15 Section 8. Validity of permits.

16 A permit issued prior to the effective date of a statute or  
17 regulation altering the requirements for the permit shall remain  
18 valid under the provisions by which the permit was granted  
19 unless otherwise agreed to by all parties.

20 Section 9. Third-party review of permit decision delays.

21 (a) Establishment.--Within 180 days of the effective date of  
22 this section, a State agency shall establish a program to review  
23 permit decision delays and resolve issues causing permit  
24 decision delays.

25 (b) Third-party.--A State agency shall contract with a  
26 third-party professional to administer a program established  
27 under subsection (a) in accordance with 62 Pa.C.S. Pt. I  
28 (relating to Commonwealth procurement code). Payments to a  
29 third-party professional under this subsection shall consist of  
30 the remittance of any fees collected by a State agency from

1 applicants whose applications are subject to a permit decision  
2 delay.

3 (c) Review.--A State agency shall, immediately after  
4 establishing a program under subsection (a), refer applications  
5 that have been submitted to the State agency and are subject to  
6 permit decision delay to a third-party professional for review  
7 and resolution. A permit application that becomes subject to  
8 permit decision delay after the establishment of a program under  
9 subsection (a) shall be submitted by the State agency to a  
10 third-party professional for review and resolution no later than  
11 three business days after the application becomes subject to  
12 permit decision delay.

13 (d) Issuance.--After a third-party professional's review of  
14 an application which is subject to a permit decision delay and  
15 the resolution of all issues causing the delay, the third-party  
16 professional shall transmit the application to the State agency  
17 for issuance of the permit.

18 Section 10. Annual reports.

19 No later than January 31 of each year, a State agency shall  
20 submit a report to the General Assembly that, at a minimum,  
21 shall contain the following information from the immediately  
22 preceding calendar year:

23 (1) The number of applications received.

24 (2) The number of applications reviewed by the State  
25 agency that received a decision without being referred to a  
26 third-party professional.

27 (3) The average time frame for permit decisions from the  
28 State agency on applications that received a decision without  
29 being referred to a third-party professional.

30 (4) The number of applications reviewed by third-party

1 professionals.

2 (5) The average time frame for contracted third-party  
3 professionals to complete an application review.

4 (6) The number of State agency employees reviewing  
5 permit applications as organized by each regional office of  
6 the State agency, if applicable, and the number of  
7 applications each State employee reviewed.

8 Section 11. Construction.

9 Nothing in this act shall be construed to limit or otherwise  
10 alter a State agency's authority to revoke a permit for failure  
11 to comply with the laws of this Commonwealth.

12 Section 12. Effective date.

13 This act shall take effect in 60 days.