

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION LEGISLATIVE REPORT

DEC Permit Expediting Program (PEP)

Year: 2025 Date reported: 1/14/2026

Authorizing statute: 3 V.S.A. §2822(g)

Committees: Vermont General Assembly

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Executive Summary

This report is submitted pursuant to 3 V.S.A. §2822(g), which requires the Secretary of Natural Resources (Secretary) to provide the General Assembly with an annual summary of activities in the permit programs managed by the Department of Environmental Conservation (Department). This report includes an annual summary of activities for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2025 (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025). The legislation that established the fees for the Department's regulatory programs was last reexamined by the Legislature in 2015. In accordance with 3 V.S.A. §2822(g), the Secretary established performance standards for the timely processing of applications for permits, licenses and registrations issued by the Department. Performance standards were developed based on a goal of having 90% of permits processed meet their respective standard.

Key Takeaways

- In SFY 2025, the Department issued a total of 5,315 decisions. Of those decisions, an average of 86% met their respective performance standard. The % was calculated by dividing the total # of Permits that met the PEP Standard by the total # of applications received. The Department on average had 35-40 positions (10-11%) vacant throughout the SFY 2025, a slight increase to SFY 2024.
- In SFY 2025 the Department collected \$7,280,385 in permit fees for those covered under PEP and detailed in the included report table.
- In our ongoing desire to be more efficient and accessible, the Department continued to expand on efforts that began under the COVID-19 pandemic aimed at creating program specific online forms so that the public could submit applications, payments, as well as upload data reports and other supporting application forms electronically using our web-based online submittal system, ANR Online.
- In SFY 2025 we had a 2.5% increase in the number of total online submissions, and 3.3% increase in the amount of revenue received electronically from SFY 2024.

SFY 2024: 40,203 total online submittals; and included 11,867 electronic payments = \$8,032,640.00
SFY 2025: 41,232 total online submittals; and included 11,643 electronic payments = \$8,300,568.00

Discussion

Areas that Hinder Effectiveness - Our average calculated was 86% for meeting performance standards, up slightly from 84% in SFY 2024. Staffing remained a challenge in SFY 2025, including an elevated level of vacancies and continued recruitment challenges. The Department on average had 35-40 positions vacant throughout the SFY 2025, the uptick largely due to an overall increase in positions resulting from Act 121 of 2024 (the “Flood Safety Act”) and ongoing challenges in employee retention and recruitment.

Other factors affecting performance include a backlog of pending permits from prior years in certain cases, the seasonal nature of permit submissions – which results in a large influx of applications in the spring followed by slower periods in the off-season – and the need to coordinate with other permits or regulatory requirements before issuance. Some programs have developed solutions, such as general permits for low-complexity projects, which have successfully met PEP standards and highlight the workload pressures on staff. The Department continues to evaluate staffing and process improvements, including potential adjustments to PEP standards, to better align expectations with current project complexity and program capacity.

Identifying Opportunities to Improve Performance – The Department has steadily expanded its web-based permit and application system, ANR Online, since its launch in February 2015. ANR Online now supports online permit applications, required registrations, reporting, and electronic payments. Recent efforts have continued focused on building out program-specific application materials, report filings, and payment forms to further modernize and streamline permitting. In 2022 we completed integration with the DEC Financial Database which allows fee coding to be embedded into ANR Online payment forms and automated transfer of deposit and coding information to program databases. SFY 2025 saw continued growth in online submittals and total electronic payment volume compared to prior fiscal years

In 2018, as a result of Act 150, the Department launched the Environmental Notice Bulletin (ENB) to publicize most notices and documents related to permits being processed through the Department. This online system replaced an existing tool that was out of date and provided limited information to the public. The development of this database created efficiencies in issuing public notice on pending permit applications and decisions.

In 2025, the Department began developing priority improvements to the ENB that have focused on enhancing accessibility and usability. Efforts include:

- Exploring how to keep completed ENB records publicly accessible after the appeal period, with a preference for a streamlined, consolidated search interface to improve the user experience.
- Developing a map-based feature so projects can be searched by location on a map or specific parcel of land.
- Evaluate the feasibility of using ENB to post other DEC notices beyond the original programs required by Act 150 to centralize public access.

Additionally, the Department has begun developing a more coordinated “front door” permitting services model to improve predictability and simplify navigation of the permitting system for applicants. This effort aims to streamline intake, provide clearer guidance at the start of a project, and improve coordination across programs - particularly for common permitting needs such as wastewater, drinking water, stormwater, and wetlands. By refining early project triage, strengthening pre-application assistance, and enhancing internal

coordination, the Department will seek to further reduce delays caused by incomplete applications, inconsistent information, and siloed processes. While still in development, this work is an important step toward creating a more efficient, accessible, and user-friendly permitting system for Vermonters. Collectively, these efforts aim to strengthen communication with the public while enhancing transparency, accessibility, and overall user satisfaction.

Certification That Revenue is at Least Equal to Cost - As in prior years, additional funds from other sources (federal, special, etc.) continued to be leveraged and used to support the Department's permit programs and initiatives in SFY 2025. This means that revenues generated by permit fees do not cover the full cost of administering these permit programs. The Department's SFY 2025 budget was comprised of general funds, over 20 different special funds (including the environmental permit fund), federal grant funds and interdepartmental funds.

SFY 2025 PEP Report Data Table (7/1/2024 – 6/30/2025):

Division/Program Permit Activity Type Name	Applications Received	Decisions Issued	PEP Standard	Average PEP Days	# Permits Met PEP Standard	Percent Permits Met PEP Standard	Fee Amount Collected
Air Quality Climate Division Engineering Services							
Air Pollution Control Major Source Construction/Subchapter X Operating Permit	1	1	175	119	1	100%	\$55,000
Air Pollution Control Minor Source Construction / Subchapter X Operating Permit	10	7	150	65	6	86%	
Air Pollution Control Minor Source Construction Permit	5	1	150	188	0	0%	
Air Pollution Control Permit Administrative Amendment	16	13	30	44	6	46%	
Air Pollution Control Subchapter X Operating Permit	25	17	150	327	8	47%	\$2,100
Drinking Water and Ground Water Protection Division							
Notice of Intent - Public Water System General Permit to Operate - Transient Non-Community	36	33	120	22	31	94%	\$74,445
Public Water System Construction Permit	52	36	30	73	3	8%	\$85,969
Public Water System Individual Permit to Operate	88	89	120	254	64	72%	\$734,648
Indirect Discharge Permit - Individual - Greater than 10,000 gpd	4	0	90	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Indirect Discharge Permit - Individual - Less than or equal to 10,000 gpd	12	12	120	228	2	17%	\$8,515
Potable Water Supply/Wastewater Disposal/Subdivision Greater than 560 gpd	602	645	45	19	639	99%	\$745,558
Potable Water Supply/Wastewater Disposal/Subdivision Less than 560 gpd	2215	2268	30	12	2257	100%	\$563,726
Approval to Sell Bottled Water in Vermont	32	78	30	357	0	0%	\$212,402
Public Water System Construction Permit - Minor Amendment	9	9	21	25	5	56%	
Public Water System Source Permit	21	23	180	51	23	100%	\$14,380
Public Water System Source Permit - minor amendment	2	2	180	17	2	100%	
General Water Main Construction Authorization	67	72	30	23	55	76%	
Indirect Discharge Permit - Notice of Intent General Permit	2	3	30	13	2	100%	\$178,662

Division/Program Permit Activity Type Name	Applications Received	Decisions Issued	PEP Standard	Average PEP Days	# Permits Met PEP Standard	Percent Permits Met PEP Standard	Fee Amount Collected
Underground Injection Control - Wastewater Tracking System Permit	0	2	60	144	0	0%	\$8,603
General Storage Tank Rehabilitation Construction Permit	4	2	30	21	2	100%	
Waste Management and Prevention Division							
Landfill Certification and Treatment - New or Complex Renewal	2	2	260	12	2	100%	\$247,268
Landfill Post Closure Certification	2	3	120	400	1	33%	
Recycling Facility Certification - Categorical	6	6	30	20	5	83%	
Solid Waste Facility Certification - Administrative Amendment	5	8	30	35	6	75%	
Transfer Station/Recycling Facility - New or Complex Renewal	5	4	160	75	3	75%	\$463,166
Transfer Station/Recycling Facility - Renewal	23	30	100	71	26	87%	\$211,025
Category 1 Underground Storage Tank - Initial Operating Permit and renewals	116	91	60	15	91	100%	
Category 1 Underground Storage Tank - Renewal Operating Permit	6	6	30	11	5	83%	
Category 1 Underground Storage Tank - Transfer of Permit to New Owner	79	82	120	8	79	96%	\$201,250
Salvage Yard Permit	2	23	30	41	12	52%	\$46,100
Watershed Management and Prevention Division							
Lakes and Ponds							
Aquatic Nuisance Control General Permit: Notice of Intent	3	5	30	22	4	80%	\$175
Aquatic Nuisance Control Individual Permit - Control Methods other than Bottom Barrier or Mechanical Device	5	5	150	175	2	40%	\$500
Aquatic Nuisance Control Individual Permit - Use of Bottom Barrier or Mechanical Devices	20	13	45	98	1	8%	\$1,300
Lake Encroachment Individual Permit	48	53	60	44	48	91%	\$30,242
Shoreland Project Registration	37	37	15	7	33	89%	\$3,800
Shoreland Protection Individual Permit- Minor Amendment	0	0	30	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Shoreland Protection Individual Permit	117	113	30	28	88	78%	\$93,998
River Corridor Management							
Stream Alteration General Permit-Authorization	22	26	15	40	3	12%	\$23,800

Division/Program Permit Activity Type Name	Applications Received	Decisions Issued	PEP Standard	Average PEP Days	# Permits Met PEP Standard	Percent Permits Met PEP Standard	Fee Amount Collected
Stream Alteration General Permit Emergency Protective Measure	28	29	15	3	28	97%	
Stream Alteration General Permit Next Flood Measure	309	305	15	4	289	95%	
Stream Alteration General Permit Registration	129	112	15	54	30	27%	\$7,800
Stream Alteration Individual Permit	6	4	30	93	2	50%	\$1,550
Stream Alteration Mineral Prospecting	7	10	15	55	5	50%	\$125
Stormwater							
Individual Construction Stormwater Permit (INDC)	14	16	45	22	15	94%	\$22,200
Individual Stormwater Discharge Permit (INDS)	30	28	60	220	16	57%	\$156,827
Municipal Roads General Permit 3- 9040 (MRGP): Notice of Intent	4	4	30	24	3	75%	\$720
Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems General Permit 3-9014 (MS4 GP)	0	4	60	529	0	0%	
Stormwater General Permit 3-9020 (CGP) for Low Risk Projects: Notice of Intent	190	192	15	13	171	89%	\$21,320
Stormwater General Permit, Operational (9010, 9015, and 9050): Notice of Intent	594	543	45	42	364	67%	\$2,374,822
Stormwater Runoff from Construction Sites General Permit 3-9020 (CGP): Notice of Intent	40	45	45	12	42	93%	\$24,380
Transportation Separate Stormwater General Permit 3-9007 (TS4 GP)	3	3	90	65	2	67%	
Wastewater Discharge							
Federal Pretreatment Individual Permit	6	10	180	676	1	10%	
General Permit 3-9016 Notice of Intent: Discharges from Petroleum- related Remediation Activities into Municipal Wastewater Treatment Facilities	1	0	30	0	0	N/A	\$720
Wastewater Discharge Individual Permit - Municipal	20	7	180	1,957	2	29%	\$27,734
Wetlands							
Wetlands General Permit	52	51	120	36	51	100%	\$22,578
Wetlands Individual Permit	131	125	90	66	105	84%	\$612,377
Wetlands Individual Permit- Minor Amend.	8	7	30	13	7	100%	\$600
Totals	5,276	5,315			4,584	86%	\$7,280,385