

HB 4102: Streamlined Permitting at Oregon DEQ

Background

HB 4102 modernizes how the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) can enter into agreements with businesses to expedite or enhance regulatory processes. **Currently, DEQ is experiencing delays in processing air and water quality permits, with wait times often exceeding 18 months.** This backlog hurts business development, increases costs, and delays environmental protections. The current “Receipts Authority” statute (ORS 468.073) allows DEQ to hire qualified professionals to expedite permitting but is underutilized due to its restrictive nature and limited public awareness. Oregon has implemented a similar streamlined permitting process for other state agencies, including Oregon Water Resources Department (ORS 536.055).

What Changes with HB 4102

- **More clarity**, allowing businesses, permittees, or regulated entities to request expedited service agreements
- **More certainty**, with a 45-day response requirement and mandatory agreement after one year of denial, if applicant has a complete application and qualified contractors are available
- **More transparency**, with all agreements, decisions, and third-party contractors posted on DEQ's website

What DOESN'T Change

- DEQ retains full regulatory authority and cannot waive environmental standards
- **All existing environmental protections and public engagement requirements remain in place**

Why This Matters

For Businesses: Provides a clear pathway to expedite time-sensitive projects while maintaining environmental standards. Particularly valuable for projects with urgent timelines or economic development priorities.

For DEQ: Creates structured process with defined timelines and transparency requirements. Allows resource flexibility through third-party contractors and limited-duration staff.

For the Public: Increases transparency through public posting of all agreements and decisions. Maintains environmental protections while enabling economic development.

