

1 AN ACT concerning State government.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Business Assistance and Regulatory Reform
5 Act is amended by changing Sections 5, 10, and 15 and by adding
6 Section 7 as follows:

7 (20 ILCS 608/5)

8 Sec. 5. Goal. The goal of this Act is to improve the
9 State's business climate by making it easier for ~~small and~~
10 ~~mid-size~~ businesses to deal with State requirements for doing
11 business. This goal will be achieved through providing quick,
12 accurate information on existing requirements, ~~and~~
13 unnecessary requirements, and expediting permit issuance.

14 (Source: P.A. 88-404.)

15 (20 ILCS 608/7 new)

16 Sec. 7. Covered project. As used in this Act, "covered
17 project" means any activity in Illinois that: (1) involves the
18 construction of infrastructure for renewable or conventional
19 energy production, electricity transmission, surface
20 transportation, aviation, ports and waterways, water resource
21 projects, broadband, pipelines, or manufacturing; (2) requires
22 authorization or environmental review by a State agency; and

1 (3) is likely to require a total investment of more than
2 \$20,000,000.

3 (20 ILCS 608/10)

4 Sec. 10. Executive Office. There is created an Office of
5 Business Permits and Regulatory Assistance (hereinafter
6 referred to as "office") within the Department of Commerce and
7 Community Affairs (now Department of Commerce and Economic
8 Opportunity) which shall ~~consolidate existing programs~~
9 ~~throughout State government,~~ provide assistance to businesses
10 ~~with fewer than 500 employees~~ in meeting State requirements
11 for doing business and perform other functions specified in
12 this Act. The office shall implement reforms to improve
13 interagency coordination that allow for expeditious permit
14 issuance for covered projects. The office shall use
15 information technology tools to track schedules for covered
16 projects and metrics in order to improve transparency and
17 accountability in the permitting process, reduce uncertainty
18 and delays, and reduce costs and risks to taxpayers. The ~~By~~
19 ~~March 1, 1994, the office shall complete and file with the~~
20 ~~Governor and the General Assembly a plan for the~~
21 ~~implementation of this Act. Thereafter,~~ the office shall carry
22 out the provisions of this Act, subject to funding through
23 appropriation.

24 (Source: P.A. 98-463, eff. 8-16-13.)

1 (20 ILCS 608/15)

2 Sec. 15. Providing Information and Expediting Permit
3 Reviews.

4 (a) The office shall provide an online information system
5 using a website ~~toll free business assistance number. The~~
6 ~~number shall be~~ advertised throughout the State. Interested
7 businesses shall ~~if requested, the caller will~~ be sent a basic
8 business kit, describing the basic requirements and procedures
9 for doing business in Illinois. ~~If requested, the caller shall~~
10 ~~be directed to one or more of the additional services provided~~
11 ~~by the office. All persons providing advice to callers on~~
12 ~~behalf of the office and all persons responsible for directly~~
13 ~~providing services to persons visiting the office or one of~~
14 ~~its branches shall be persons with small business experience~~
15 ~~in an administrative or managerial capacity.~~

16 (b) (Blank).

17 (c) Any applicant for permits required for a business
18 activity may confer with the office to obtain assistance in
19 the prompt and efficient processing and review of
20 applications. The office shall ~~may~~ designate an employee of
21 the office to act as a permit assistance manager to:

22 (1) facilitate contacts for the applicant with
23 responsible agencies;

24 (2) arrange conferences to clarify the requirements of
25 interested agencies;

26 (3) consider with State agencies the feasibility of

1 consolidating hearings and data required of the applicant;

2 (4) assist the applicant in resolution of outstanding
3 issues identified by State agencies; and

4 (5) coordinate federal, State and local regulatory
5 procedures and permit review actions to the extent
6 possible.

7 (d) The office shall publish an online ~~a~~ directory of
8 State business permits and State programs to assist ~~small~~
9 businesses.

10 (e) The office shall attempt to establish agreements with
11 local governments to allow the office to provide assistance to
12 applicants for permits required by these local governments.

13 (f) (Blank). ~~Interested State agencies shall, to the~~
14 ~~maximum extent feasible, establish procedures to expedite~~
15 ~~applications for infrastructure projects. Applications for~~
16 ~~permits for infrastructure projects shall be approved or~~
17 ~~disapproved within 45 days of submission, unless law or~~
18 ~~regulations specify a different period. If the interested~~
19 ~~agency is unable to act within that period, the agency shall~~
20 ~~provide a written notification to the office specifying~~
21 ~~reasons for its inability to act and the date by which approval~~
22 ~~or disapproval shall be determined. The office may require any~~
23 ~~interested State agency to designate an employee who will~~
24 ~~coordinate the handling of permits in that area.~~

25 (g) In addition to its responsibilities in connection with
26 permit assistance, the office shall provide general regulatory

1 information by directing businesses to appropriate officers in
2 State agencies to supply the information requested.

3 (h) The office shall help businesses to locate and apply
4 to training programs available to train current employees in
5 particular skills, techniques or areas of knowledge relevant
6 to the employees' present or anticipated job duties. In
7 pursuit of this objective, the office shall provide businesses
8 with pertinent information about training programs offered by
9 State agencies, units of local government, public universities
10 and colleges, community colleges, and school districts in
11 Illinois.

12 (i) The office shall help businesses to locate and apply
13 to State programs offering to businesses grants, loans, loan
14 or bond guarantees, investment partnerships, technology or
15 productivity consultation, or other forms of business
16 assistance.

17 (j) To the extent authorized by federal law, the office
18 shall assist businesses in ascertaining and complying with the
19 requirements of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act.

20 (k) The office shall provide confidential on-site
21 assistance in identifying problems and solutions in compliance
22 with requirements of State and federal environmental
23 regulations. The office shall work through and contract with
24 the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center to provide
25 confidential on-site consultation audits that (i) assist
26 regulatory compliance and (ii) identify pollution prevention

1 opportunities.

2 (k-5) Until July 1, 2012, the office shall provide
3 confidential on-site assistance, including, but not limited
4 to, consultation audits, to identify problems and solutions
5 regarding compliance with the requirements of the federal
6 Occupational Safety and Health Administration. On and after
7 July 1, 2012, the Department of Labor shall provide
8 confidential on-site assistance, including, but not limited
9 to, consultation audits, to identify problems and solutions
10 regarding compliance with the requirements of the federal
11 Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

12 (l) The office shall provide information on existing loan
13 and business assistance programs provided by the State.

14 (m) Each State agency having jurisdiction to approve or
15 deny a permit shall have the continuing power heretofore or
16 hereafter vested in it to make such determinations. The
17 provisions of this Act shall not lessen or reduce such powers
18 and shall modify the procedures followed in carrying out such
19 powers only to the extent provided in this Act.

20 (n) ~~(1)~~ Each State agency shall fully cooperate with the
21 office in providing information, documentation, personnel or
22 facilities requested by the office.

23 ~~(2) Each State agency having jurisdiction of any permit to~~
24 ~~which the master application procedure is applicable shall~~
25 ~~designate an employee to act as permit liaison office with the~~
26 ~~office in carrying out the provisions of this Act.~~

1 (o) (1) The office shall identify, develop, and track
2 metrics for the timeline of permit reviews, permit decisions,
3 and project outcomes for covered projects ~~has authority, but~~
4 ~~is not required, to keep and analyze appropriate statistical~~
5 ~~data regarding the number of permits issued by State agencies,~~
6 ~~the amount of time necessary for the permits to be issued, the~~
7 ~~cost of obtaining such permits, the types of projects for~~
8 ~~which specific permits are issued, a geographic distribution~~
9 ~~of permits, and other pertinent data the office deems~~
10 ~~appropriate.~~

11 The office shall administer and expand the use of online
12 transparency tools providing:

13 (i) tracking and reporting metrics;

14 (ii) development and posting of schedules for permit
15 reviews and permit decisions;

16 (iii) the sharing of best practices relating to
17 efficient project permitting and reviews; and

18 (iv) the visual display of relevant geospatial data to
19 support the permitting process. ~~make such data and any~~
20 ~~analysis of the data available to the public.~~

21 (2) The office shall ~~has authority, but is not required,~~
22 ~~to~~ conduct or cause to be conducted a thorough review of any
23 agency's permit requirements and the need by the State to
24 require such permits. The office shall draw on the review, on
25 its direct experience, and on its statistical analyses to
26 prepare recommendations regarding how to:

1 (i) eliminate unnecessary or antiquated permit
2 requirements;

3 (ii) consolidate duplicative or overlapping permit
4 requirements;

5 (iii) simplify overly complex or lengthy application
6 procedures;

7 (iv) expedite time-consuming agency review and
8 approval procedures; or

9 (v) otherwise improve the permitting processes in the
10 State.

11 The office shall submit copies of all recommendations
12 within 5 days of issuance to the affected agency, the
13 Governor, the General Assembly, and the Joint Committee on
14 Administrative Rules.

15 (p) The office shall ~~has authority to~~ review State forms
16 ~~on its own initiative or upon the request of another State~~
17 ~~agency~~ to ascertain the burden, if any, of complying with
18 those forms. If the office determines that a form is unduly
19 burdensome to business, it may recommend to the agency issuing
20 the form either that the form be eliminated or that specific
21 changes be made in the form.

22 (q) Not later than March 1 of each year, beginning March 1,
23 1995, the office shall submit an annual report of its
24 activities during the preceding year to the Governor and
25 General Assembly. The report shall describe the activities of
26 the office during the preceding year and shall contain

1 statistical information on the permit assistance activities of
2 the office.

3 (Source: P.A. 97-787, eff. 7-13-12; 98-346, eff. 8-14-13.)