

# FPISC ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS 2020

DEMONSTRATING FPISC'S ESSENTIAL ROLE IN DELIVERING EFFICIENCY AND TRANSPARENCY

The FAST-41 approach to interagency coordination in the permitting process continues to drive increased demand for this voluntary, statutory program and deliver the intended results for the Permitting Council member agencies and stakeholders, alike. The FAST-41 active project portfolio increased by 33% in FY 2020.

The average time for all projects to complete an EIS pursuant to NEPA was 4.5 years across agencies for the period from 2010 to 2018. At an average of 2.5 years to complete the EIS process, FAST-41 delivered **45 percent time savings** in comparison to the baseline average duration to complete an EIS. This represents an increase in time savings since 2019, which was reported as 1.5 years, or 33%.

In FY 2020 the permitting process was completed for four uniquely large and complex projects:

## **GEMINI SOLAR**

A \$1 billion, 690 megawatt solar project in Nevada that will be the largest solar photovoltaic and battery storage facility on US Federal lands and one of the largest renewable energy projects of its kind in the world.

## **BORDERLANDS WIND**

A \$200 million, 100 megawatt wind project that will deliver renewable energy to the Four Corners region, and was approved in less than two years under the FAST-41 process.

## **ALASKA LNG**

A \$38 billion project consisting of an 807-mile natural gas pipeline, gas treatment plant, gas transmission line, and liquefaction facility, one of the largest and most complex infrastructure projects in modern U.S. history.

## **CARDINAL HICKORY CREEK 345 KV TRANSMISSION LINE**

A \$500 million, 102 mile transmission line project that will connect facilities in Iowa and Wisconsin, increasing the capacity and reliability of the regional transmission system and expanding access to lower-cost electricity and renewable energy generation.

These projects represent more than:

**\$45 billion**

in economic investment

**20,000**

construction jobs

**10 years**

in time savings

FAST-41 delivers clear time and money savings while enhancing transparency and improving the quality of the environmental review and authorization process.



Number of active projects in FY 2020 with associated economic investment and jobs created.

Title 41 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST-41) created a Federal system of oversight for large-scale, complex infrastructure projects to increase communication and cooperation, enhance transparency, and encourage efficient processing of environmental reviews and authorizations.

The Permitting Council, established by FAST-41, coordinates environmental review and authorization decisions across all Federal agencies with permitting responsibilities.

The Permitting Council identifies and institutionalizes best practices that improve the efficiency and quality of the environmental review and authorization process.

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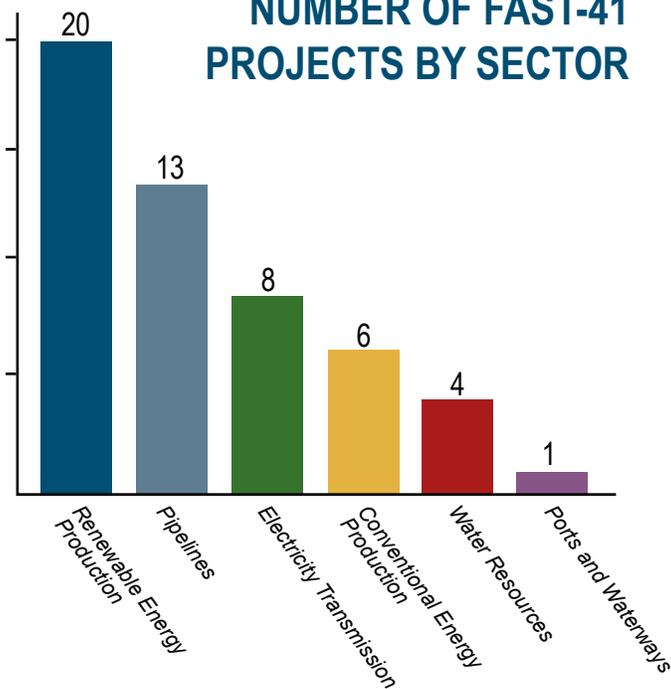
The Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council (FPISC) Office of the Executive Director (OED) is making strides toward increasing coordination, efficiency, transparency, and predictability throughout the environmental review and permitting process.

“ [FAST-41] gave us certainty and transparency into the process, which we didn't have prior to FAST-41. We are breaking ground next week (October 19, 2020) and that would not have been possible without the help of the FAST-41 team keeping the project on schedule. ”

- Gabe Henehan, P.E., Project Director, NextEra Energy Resources LLC (Project sponsor for Borderlands Wind Project)

- **Increasing on-the-ground engagement:** In FY 2020, the Executive Director and OED staff participated in 23 outreach events, traveled to 27 cities and 15 states, and visited 31 project sites.
- **Enhancing coordination and consultation with Tribes:** OED laid the ground work on tribal initiatives designed to facilitate early outreach and ongoing communication with Tribes, which will further inform Federal agencies' decision-making processes and, in turn, reduce infrastructure permitting delays.
- **Facilitating a shift to proactive project planning and management:** OED hosted and co-hosted FAST-41 virtual implementation trainings focused on sharing its best practices, tools, and resources that can move agencies and project sponsors away from reactive problem-solving and toward successful project management. Nearly 300 participants and more than 20 Federal agencies were represented at OED trainings in FY 2020.
- **Encouraging alignment and harmonization:** OED created a Milestone Planning Tool designed to help agencies and project sponsors develop an accurate and realistic permitting timetable in the Coordinated Project Plan (CPP), track upcoming deadlines, and easily adjust dates as needed.
- **Utilizing GIS in environmental decision making:** OED worked with the OMB, CEQ, and DOT to review how the standardization or enhancement of geographic information systems (GIS) and geospatial data in environmental decision making can offer efficiencies to agencies and project applicants. Through investment in GIS tools and resources, OED and its partners hold the potential to make a meaningful impact on the transparency and quality of the environmental review and permitting process.

## NUMBER OF FAST-41 PROJECTS BY SECTOR



## ABOUT THE ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS

The 2020 Annual Report to Congress assesses Permitting Council member agency progress in implementing statutorily required best practices during FY 2020, assesses challenges to implementation of FAST-41, and provides recommendations to improve transparency, efficiency, and predictability in the permitting process. The ARC is developed by the Permitting Council's Office of the Executive Director in consultation with the Permitting Council member agencies.