

# Accelerating Energy Project Permitting

## Memorandum to Government

Members of TRBOT's Energy and Climate committee agree that slow and uncertain permitting processes are creating barriers to the build-out of much-needed energy infrastructure during a period of accelerating demand.

The Government of Ontario has made it a priority to remove barriers and reduce delays to building essential transit and broadband infrastructure. However, to meet Ontario's growing energy needs, the build-out of clean energy generation, transmission and distribution projects should be treated with the same priority.

This objective is aligned with Minister Lecce's new Electrification mandate, and his stated goal of establishing Ontario as a "clean energy superpower."

## Recommendation

In the short-term, the Government of Ontario should appoint a Special Advisor on Energy Project Permitting that would help energy project proponents navigate the process, and act as a champion within government. This Special Advisor would:

1. Ensure that service standards for reviews are being met.
2. Address overlaps between various levels of government and different ministries.
3. Advocate for streamlining the approvals process to avoid unnecessary duplication. E.g.:
  - a. A 'one window' approach, where one comprehensive project requires only one provincial approval.
  - b. Streamlining approvals for project expansions vs. net new projects.
4. Recommend for the government's consideration stakeholder-informed process improvements that can be undertaken by the provincial regulator and/or system operator.

## Option 1: Premier's Appointment

An appointment by the Premier of a Special Advisor on Energy Project Permitting by way of an Order in Council, modeled on the 2018 appointment of Dr. Reuben Devlin as Special Advisor and Chair of the Premier's Council on Improving Health Care and Ending Hallway Medicine. (See Appendix for Draft OIC)

This may or may not be paired with the creation of an Advisory Council on Energy Project Permitting composed of energy sector stakeholders, including those who are represented on TRBOT's Energy and Climate Committee.

An appointee reporting to the Premier would be best positioned to ensure that all Ministries and government agencies respond with urgency to requests for information and action.

## Option 2: Minister's Appointment

A Ministerial Appointment, similar to that of David Collie as the Chair of Ontario's Electrification and Energy Transition Panel.

While still helpful, a Ministerial appointee would be reporting through the Ministry of Energy, which may limit their effectiveness in addressing barriers and delays originating in other Ministries or levels of government.

## Rationale

The Government of Canada recently announced the [establishment of a Permitting Coordinator role](#), to be based out of the Privy Council Office's Clean Growth Office.

Appointing a Special Advisor on Energy Project Permitting would provide a quick win for the Government of Ontario and the Minister of Energy.

This move would demonstrate to the energy sector that policymakers are committed to supporting their investments in critical clean energy infrastructure while also reducing the costs of duplication that are ultimately borne by the ratepayer.

*“My message is we’re going to need all of the above, plus some, to generate the energy Ontario’s economy and population demands over the next 20 or 30 years.”*  
– Hon. Steven Lecce, Ontario’s Minister of Energy and Electrification

