

# FPISC ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS 2019

DEMONSTRATING FPISC'S ESSENTIAL ROLE IN DELIVERING EFFICIENCY AND TRANSPARENCY

## THE FY 2019 ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS

The 2019 Annual Report to Congress (ARC) assesses Permitting Council member agency progress in implementing the best practices during Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, assesses challenges to implementation of FAST-41, and provides recommendations to improve transparency, efficiency, and accountability across the Federal government for FAST-41 projects.

The ARC is developed by FPISC's Office of the Executive Director (OED) in consultation with the Permitting Council agencies, each of which was given the opportunity to share comments and information with OED concerning the performance of their agency.

This year's report reflects a transition to a performance-based assessment of agencies' progress in implementing the best practices. This new approach will allow Permitting Council member agencies to focus on activities that improve project permitting performance.

## 2019 FPISC HIGHLIGHTS

**\$12.7 billion**

Economic investment represented by FAST-41 projects that completed the Federal permitting process in FY 2019.

**\$104 billion**

In domestic economic investment during FY 2019 as a result of FPISC's coordination of environmental reviews and authorizations.

Since January 2017, the Permitting Council agencies have engaged successfully in improving the permitting process for the 45 projects currently covered under FAST-41. As of the end of FY 2019, these efforts led to the completion of the Federal permitting process for 22, or nearly half, of all FAST-41 covered projects.

FPISC has a detailee program consisting of senior-level interagency staff. They comprise an interdisciplinary team dedicated to identifying issues and problem solving for FAST-41 projects. Members of this team — which in 2019 consisted of detailees from USACE, NRC, DOT, USDA, and DOI — bring their unique expertise related to each agency's environmental review and authorization processes to support FPISC's efforts and encourage successful outcomes.

## BACKGROUND

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

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

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

### FPISC

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## 2019 AGENCY HIGHLIGHTS

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**\$50 million in cost savings over three years as a result of the U.S. Forest Service’s agency-wide Environmental Assessment and Decision Making process improvements, which deliver more efficient NEPA analyses and high-quality land management decisions in less time (an approximately 14% reduction). This resulted in the effective re-investment of staff time equivalent to these cost savings to other new job creating projects nation-wide.**

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**Industry leading investment in essential electronic communication and project management tools by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to offer better, faster, easier and less labor-intensive services.**

Continued investment and support in these products facilitate efficient communication with agencies and other stakeholders, allowing them to readily subscribe to project-specific email notifications, submit filings electronically, and submit comments electronically throughout the review process. Additionally, FERC uses social media to notify stakeholders of issuances of Environmental Impact Statements and Commission orders.

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**Increased collaboration and deliberate government-wide problem-solving resulting in substantive reductions in project delays through open dialog among agencies and applicants regarding project schedules and regulatory requirements. For example, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers used the FAST-41 early coordination framework to lead interagency meetings with all relevant Federal and State agencies, and then develop reasonable schedules for all permitting requirements within 60 days for covered projects. The FAST-41 framework was reported to improve collaboration, information sharing, and prevent conflicts in meeting regulatory requirements.**

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