



The official website of the Governor of Massachusetts

**Governor
Deval Patrick** in Governor's Office

The Administration	Constituent Services	Press Office	Agenda	Legislation & Executive Orders	Get Involved
------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------------	--	------------------------------

[Home](#) > [Press Office](#) > [Press Releases](#) >DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNORTIMOTHY P. MURRAY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR**Media Contact**Kyle Sullivan 617-725-4025
Cyndi Roy 617-725-4025
Jose Martinez 617-725-4025

For Immediate release - March 01, 2007

GOVERNOR PATRICK ANNOUNCES MEASURES TO SPUR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT WHILE PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT**Time-to-permit time will be cut 20%, wetlands appeals reformed, in order to achieve environmental regulation at the speed of business**

BOSTON- Wednesday, March 1, 2007 - After a tour of the Genzyme Center - a top-rated "green building" built on a former brownfields site that serves as the biotech company's corporate headquarters - Governor Deval L. Patrick today announced two initiatives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of environmental regulation. These measures will speed decisions that are critical for development projects, and also allow the Department to concentrate its resources on the most pressing environmental concerns. The measures are:

- Proposed regulations, which will soon be released for public comment by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), to reduce by 20 percent the time period for most permit decisions. In addition, MassDEP has committed to issuing 90 percent of all permit decisions within 180 days, and to forming a working group of stakeholders to review permit categories that frequently exceed 180 days for ways to improve performance.
- Reform of the process for wetlands appeals, focusing on delays at the Division of Administrative Law Appeals, where cases now languish for months and even years, with minimal environmental benefit. A task force of prominent environmental lawyers led by the General Counsels of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs and MassDEP will present proposals for reform by May 1.

"My administration is committed to the highest environmental standards, and to a strong program of environmental enforcement," said Governor Patrick. "These measures preserve and protect the environment, but also promise efficiency for the industries we regulate. This is regulation at the speed of business."

The shortened timelines for permits will be made possible, in part, by expanded use of MassDEP's Web-based permitting process and other technology-based efficiencies. Key permits targeted for closer review include those associated with significant economic development and energy projects, as well as those with a high volume of activity and those where more than 20 percent take longer than 180 days to issue decisions. These permits include those for groundwater discharge of wastewater, air quality permits, and reuse of contaminated soil, as well as Chapter 91 licenses for development in filled or flowed tidelands. Accelerating permit timelines through technological and process improvements will free up staff time for the highest priority permitting reviews and environmental enforcement efforts.

Reform of wetlands appeals will also allow for more timely action on vital projects, with minimal impact on environmental interests. Currently, 31 wetland appeals have languished in the Division of Administrative Law Appeals without decision for more than six months, another 32 for more than a year. These appeals rarely result in additional environmental protection: Of the 65 final rulings issued from 2004 to 2006, only three resulted in substantial changes in DEP actions.

Some of the appeals that languish at DALA involve projects that serve a public interest, such as the proposed Hoosac Wind electric generating plant in the Berkshires, which has been tied up for over two years in a wetland appeal. Second, these appeals place a major drain on MassDEP staff members, who must participate in these sometimes lengthy proceedings rather than conducting important environmental law enforcement or other activities.

The Genzyme headquarters, where Governor Patrick made this announcement, is a LEED-certified "green building," based on site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality. It was also constructed on a brownfields site that was heavily contaminated with coal tar. Development was aided and facilitated by MassDEP's flexible cleanup regulations and the MassBusiness Brownfields Program's state-subsidized environmental insurance.

"We want to encourage redevelopment that comes out this environmentally friendly, and is accomplished this smoothly," said

Governor Patrick. "That's why we want our environmental permitting to be as efficient and effective as possible."

###

Follow us on [Twitter](#) – View our [Photos](#) – Watch our [Videos](#)