

ERIC BEIGHTEL

Experienced executive leader and policy professional with 25+ years advancing environmental review and approval of major infrastructure projects. Nationally recognized for expertise in environmental policy and federal permitting, regularly engaging with industry, government, and stakeholder audiences on infrastructure development, regulatory reform, and project delivery. Skilled communicator, public speaker, and strategic advisor with experience spanning federal and state government and the private sector.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATES (ESA)

Federal Strategy Director

January 2025 – Present

Serve as corporate lead for tracking and interpreting federal policy affecting ESA and its clients. Serve as strategic advisor on key projects for key clients and responsible for building new federal policy practice. Key focus areas include:

- Established regular internal “Fed Watch” written briefings that update staff on critical federal policy developments influencing environmental review and permitting and infrastructure development.
- Launched and led a quarterly client-focused webinar series on federal policy averaging 300+ registrants.
- Built a federal funding practice to identify, pursue, and secure federal funding for clients
- Lead internal working group to responsibly integrate artificial intelligence into workflows.
- Coordinating with corporate communications to raise the profile of the firm and publish thought leadership on infrastructure permitting and policy.

FEDERAL PERMITTING IMPROVEMENT STEERING COUNCIL

Executive Director

July 2023 – January 2025

Presidentially appointed Executive Director and Chair of the Permitting Council, responsible for overseeing a portfolio of over \$100 billion in infrastructure projects in the [FAST-41 program](#), administering appropriations of \$350 million, and leading an agency with nearly 30 staff. Met regularly with the Executive Office of the President to advance priorities of the Biden-Harris administration to improve federal permitting processes for infrastructure projects across 18 different sectors. Set policy priorities for the agency and engaged with Congressional leaders and industry stakeholders to elevate the profile of the agency and expand its impact. Key accomplishments of the agency under my leadership include:

- Expanded project portfolio by 25%+, including first tribal projects under FAST-41.
- Providing permitting assistance to ten of eleven active offshore wind projects in the Atlantic,
- Testifying before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and providing technical assistance that produced the Federal Permitting Council Improvement Act voted out of committee on a bipartisan basis
- Partnering with federal agencies to invest over \$180 million to build permitting capacity
- Directed \$40M+ in technology investments to improve permitting efficiency.
- Creating and investing \$15 million in a Tribal Assistance Program to support tribal engagement in infrastructure permitting
- Establishing Permitting University to provide critical training to federal staff
- Entering into a first-of-its-kind agreement with the State of New Mexico to advance transmission and renewable energy projects
- Developing new branding, messaging, and outreach strategies to raise the profile of the agency
- Developing, designing and launching first agency website

HDR, INC

Principal for Infrastructure Policy and Environmental Strategy

ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT

September 2021 - June 2023

Served as HDR’s national lead for analyzing and summarizing federal infrastructure legislation, regulation and policy. Supported internal and external clients in understanding the changes in policy and how new funding opportunities create opportunities for their programs and projects. Work included creating a [library of policy briefs](#) analyzing critical components of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Inflation Reduction Act, and the CHIPS and Science Act. Also served as national lead for environmental strategy, advising clients on how best to navigate federal environmental reviews and

authorizations for some of the largest and most complex projects in the country. Developed a team of policy professionals to provide strategic advice to clients on optimizing project funding opportunities while accelerating environmental approvals. Helped lead internal initiatives to expand services to enter the broadband market by analyzing federal and state policy and building internal expertise on opportunities.

WSP USA

Senior Director, National Environmental Policy Practice

VICE PRESIDENT

April 2015 - September 2021

Responsible for a team of five that provided clients nationwide with strategic advice on efficiently completing federal environmental permits and reviews for complex infrastructure projects. Representative projects include:

- *Environmental Program Manager for I-270 pre-NEPA activities on the I-495 & I-270 P3 Program, Maryland State Highway Administration.* Led project team in developing a Planning and Environment Linkages Study to prepare for an Environmental Impact Statement to be completed within the mandated two-year timeline.
- *Deputy NEPA Assignment Manager, California High-Speed Rail Authority.* Served as the consultant lead for the State of California's NEPA Assignment Program. Lead the development of the application and negotiation of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Authority and the Federal Railroad Administration, delivering the first assignment of rail NEPA responsibilities in the nation. Served as lead NEPA reviewer for three environmental impact statements and supported five others.

US DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Office of the Secretary

Senior Environmental Policy Advisor

November 2008 - April 2015

Served as subject matter expert in the Office of Policy, covering environmental policy, laws and regulations; and as the departmental lead on interagency working groups seeking to improve federal project planning and delivery performance.

Coordinated directly with departmental leadership to advance administration goals. Accomplishments included:

- Acting Director of the Interagency Infrastructure Permitting Improvement Team, managing a team of eight tasked with implementing the strategies developed by the White House Infrastructure Steering Committee to reduce permitting and review timelines.
- Detailed to the Office of Management and Budget as Senior Advisor on Environmental Reviews and Approvals for Infrastructure and led implementation of Executive Order 13604 "Improving Performance of Federal Permitting and Review of Infrastructure Projects"
- Pioneered the development of the [Federal Infrastructure Permitting Dashboard](#)
- Departmental representative to the White House Infrastructure Working Group; serving as subject matter expert on the federal environmental review and approval process, representing DOT's interests and proposing policy and regulatory reform that promoted efficiency in the review and approval process.
- Project Manager for the implementation of the Presidential Memorandum on Speeding Infrastructure Development Through More Efficient and Effective Permitting and Environmental Review, responsible for compiling Agency Review Plans and assembling a comprehensive reporting of the federal government's efforts to advance efficiency in environmental permitting and approvals.

Earlier positions include Environmental Protection Specialist with the Federal Highway Administration and the Cultural and Natural Resources Manager with the Kansas Army National Guard.

EDUCATION

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

Arlington, VA

Master of Public Policy

May 2012

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

Lawrence, KS

Bachelor of General Studies, Environmental Studies

August 2001

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Board Director, National Association of Environmental Professionals

Member, American Council of Engineering Companies: Water and Environment; Energy Subcommittees