

Service and Regulatory Efficiency Act

CHAPTER 35 OF THE ACTS OF 2015

as amended by

2025, c. 16, ss. 87-94



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CHAPTER 35 OF THE ACTS OF 2015
amended 2025, c. 16, ss. 87-94

**An Act Respecting
Service and Regulatory Efficiency**

title amended 2025, c. 16, s. 87.

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WHEREAS the Government of Nova Scotia recognizes that the climate for economic growth and prosperity in the Province, including the productivity of its private and public sectors, is directly affected by the efficiency, transparency and accountability of regulation and the quality of regulatory governance;

OCTOBER 3, 2025

AND WHEREAS the Government of Nova Scotia recognizes that regulation is essential to protect interests such as public health and safety, the environment, workers and consumers;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Nova Scotia endeavours to ensure that regulations are enacted only after full identification and examination of their impact and that they are not more broad, intrusive, complex or costly to citizens, businesses and other organizations than is necessary;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Nova Scotia is committed to improving the efficiency, transparency and accountability of regulation and, for that purpose, has created the Office of Service Efficiency to lead the improvement of provincial regulatory performance;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Nova Scotia is committed to service efficiency and regulatory effectiveness for citizens, businesses and other organizations;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Nova Scotia is committed to supporting individuals and businesses by streamlining regulations, reducing unnecessary burdens and fostering a strong economy;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Nova Scotia recognizes the importance of balancing regulatory oversight with economic growth and the need to make it easier for individuals and businesses to interact with the Government:

Preamble amended 2025, c. 16, s. 88.

Short title

1 This Act may be cited as the *Service and Regulatory Efficiency Act*. 2015, c. 35, s. 1; 2025, c. 16, s. 89.

Interpretation

2 In this Act,

(a) “Charter” means the Charter of Governing Principles established under this Act;

(b) *repealed 2025, c. 16, s. 90.*

(c) “Minister” means the Minister of Service Efficiency;

(d) “Office” means the Office of Service Efficiency;

(e) “regulation” includes

(i) a statutory, regulatory, procedural or administrative rule or other requirement governing citizens, businesses or other organizations, and

(ii) a regulation within the meaning of the *Regulations Act*;

(f) “regulatory governance” includes the principles, processes, procedures and practices by which regulation is developed, assessed, proposed, scrutinized, measured and monitored for impact and publicly reported on. 2015, c. 35, s. 2; 2025, c. 16, s. 90.

Minister has supervision and management

2A The Minister is responsible for the general supervision and management of this Act. 2015, c. 16, s. 91.

PART I

REGULATORY GOVERNANCE

Charter of Governing Principles for Service and Regulatory Efficiency

3 (1) The Minister may adopt a Charter of Governing Principles for Service and Regulatory Efficiency to promote sound regulatory governance.

(2) The Charter must include principles that the Minister believes, based on the advice of the Office, will further the purpose of this Act and reflect best practice in regulatory governance. 2015, c. 35, s. 3; 2025, c. 16, s. 92.

Role of Office

4 (1) The Office shall oversee, monitor and, in accordance with this Act, report on the application of the Charter.

(2) The Office shall advise and assist the Minister and departments, offices and agencies of the Government of the Province in achieving the purpose of this Act and the Charter. 2015, c. 35, s. 4.

Annual report

5 (1) The Minister shall, on or before June 30th of each year, make available to the public an annual report with respect to the work of the Office, including

(a) the progress made in improving regulation and reducing regulatory burden; and

(b) the goals and objectives of the Office for the coming year.

(2) *repealed 2025, c. 16, s. 93.*

2015, c. 35, s. 5; 2025, c. 16, s. 93.

Regulations

6 (1) The Minister may make regulations

(a) respecting the form, publication and contents of the annual report referred to in Section 5;

(b) respecting the responsibilities and duties of the Office;

(c) respecting principles, practices, procedures, measures, targets, goals or other requirements, the adoption of which, in the opinion of the Minister, is necessary or desirable for ensuring the efficiency, accountability or transparency of regulation and good regulatory practice and governance;

(d) classifying regulations and prescribing different requirements by class for the purpose of this Act;

(e) requiring that a class or classes of regulations proposed to be adopted and affecting business come into force on a common designated date or dates each year;

(f) excluding any class, form or type of regulation from the scope of application of this Act;

(g) defining any word or expression used but not defined in this Act;

(h) further defining any word or expression defined in this Act;

(i) respecting any other matter or thing that the Governor in Council considers necessary or advisable to carry out effectively the intent and purpose of this Act.

(2) The exercise by the Minister of the authority contained in subsection (1) is a regulation within the meaning of the *Regulations Act*. 2015, c. 35, s. 6.

Legal proceedings

7 For greater certainty, nothing in this Act

(a) creates a right of action; or

(b) entitles a person to commence a legal proceeding or affects any legal proceeding. 2015, c. 35, s. 7.

Effect of non-compliance

8 No regulation is of no legal force or effect by reason only that it does not comply with the principles set out in this Act or the Charter. 2015, c. 35, s. 8.

PART II

SERVICE STANDARDS

Service standard

9 (1) Where, after the coming into force of this Section, an enactment imposes a requirement to obtain a licence or permit from a Government department for an activity or thing that did not previously require a licence or permit, that department shall develop and make publicly available a service standard respecting

(a) the time within which a decision on the issuance of the licence or permit must be made following receipt of a completed application for the licence or permit; and

(b) any other matter that the minister of that department considers appropriate.

(2) A service standard is made publicly available in accordance with subsection (1) if the service standard is posted on publicly accessible website.

(3) Where the enactment that imposes a requirement to obtain a licence or permit provides for the time within which a decision on the issuance of the licence or permit must be made, subsection (1) does not apply. 2025, c. 16, s. 94.

PART III

NATURAL RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND BURDEN REDUCTION

Principles of Part

10 This Part is based on the following principles respecting natural resources development:

- (a) productive and effective industries require regulations that ensure safety and environmental protection while balancing regulatory effectiveness and private-industry efficiency;
- (b) a sustainable society requires an active economy and both of these can be achieved through the application of well-planned and thoughtful regulation;
- (c) service efficiency and regulatory effectiveness is a shared responsibility between the Government and the private sector and requires responsible and good faith actions from both. 2025, c. 16, s. 94.

Red-tape reduction action plan

11 (1) On the request of the Minister, a department shall, in coordination with the Office of Service Efficiency, develop, implement and maintain a red-tape reduction action plan.

- (2) A red-tape reduction action plan must
 - (a) include targets for reducing the time within which a decision on the issuance of a licence, permit or other authorization is made following receipt of an application for the licence, permit or other authorization;
 - (b) identify potential changes that could be made to improve service efficiency and regulatory effectiveness; and
 - (c) assess the benefits and risks of any potential change identified by the department. 2025, c. 16, s. 94.

Powers of Government

12 The Government may

- (a) for the purpose of reducing the administrative burden associated with obtaining licences, permits and other authorizations for mineral-resource projects and reducing the time within which decisions are made on the issuance of such licences, permits or authorizations, implement a one-window approach for proponents of mineral-resource projects and their agents, together with a process for coordination among departments in relation to the regulation of mineral-resource projects;
- (b) establish a team of public servants to provide a single point of contact with Government for proponents of mineral-resource projects and

their agents and to support coordination of the regulation of mineral-resource projects; and

(c) implement a digital solution to assist proponents of mineral-resource projects and their agents to assess the status of their applications for licences, permits and other authorizations. 2025, c. 16, s. 94.

Regulatory review

13 The Office of Service Efficiency may, in coordination with the Department of Environment and Climate Change, the Department of Natural Resources and such other departments as the Minister considers necessary, undertake a comprehensive regulatory review to evaluate laws, policies and administrative processes relating to mineral-resource projects and identify improvements to promote service efficiency and regulatory effectiveness. 2025, c. 16, s. 94.

Recognition of qualified persons

14 To improve service efficiencies in the issuance of licences, permits and other authorizations related to mineral-resource projects, the Department of Environment and Climate Change, the Department of Natural Resources and such other departments as the Minister considers necessary may establish a policy to recognize persons qualified to provide professional advice, opinions and certifications in relation to mineral-resource projects that may, without further review or with limited further review, be accepted by the departments. 2025, c. 16, s. 94.

Review of fees

15 The Government may review each provincially imposed fee associated with mineral-resource projects in order to decide either to eliminate the fee or to make the fee eligible for reimbursement once an acceptable threshold of development or investment is achieved and, upon reaching a decision, may take the necessary steps to implement that decision. 2025, c. 16, s. 94.
