

BRITISH COLUMBIA ACCELERATING INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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British Columbia's reelected government is increasing centralized control and efficiency in the development of infrastructure projects in the province. These efforts are led by a new [Ministry of Infrastructure](#) formed after the October 2024 election (one of two successors to the former Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure).

[The Infrastructure Projects Act](#) (Bill 15) was enacted in May 2025 to frame these efforts. Bill 15 outlines broad powers for the Ministry to use to accelerate review and development of infrastructure projects built by provincial and local agencies. Codification of these powers became effective immediately, but the remainder of Bill 15 will take effect only with subsequent Royal Assent. In July, the Ministry opened a [public engagement process](#) seeking comments to inform its structuring of key administrative provisions that will define responsibilities and opportunities for agencies, landowners, developers, and environmental and land use professionals in these important infrastructure projects.

“The Ministry opened a public engagement process seeking comments that will **DEFINE RESPONSIBILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES** for agencies, landowners, developers, and environmental and land use professionals”




What Powers Does Bill 15 Assign to the Ministry of Infrastructure?

Section 2 sets out the Minister's powers:

2(1) The minister may do the following in relation to infrastructure projects:

- (a) establish policies relating to infrastructure projects;
- (b) plan and manage infrastructure projects;
- (c) make recommendations for the effective coordination and development of infrastructure projects;
- (d) make recommendations regarding priorities for infrastructure projects;
- (e) acquire land, on behalf of the government or on behalf of a prescribed person or entity, or a prescribed class of persons or entities, by purchase, lease or otherwise, for present or future infrastructure projects;
- (f) dispose of land, or make land available, to any prescribed person or entity or prescribed class of persons or entities;
- (g) transfer the administration of land to another minister of the government with the consent of that other minister;
- (h) exercise any other prescribed power.



2 (2) With the consent of the minister, another minister of the government who has the administration of land may, for the purposes of this Act, transfer the administration of the land to the minister.

What Issues Does the Engagement Process Address?

The Ministry's engagement process will take place in three phases over eight months and seek comments on how to structure its use of these powers.

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Phase 1 - How to define provincially significant infrastructure projects

Bill 15 provides for two “categories” of “infrastructure projects.”

- Category 1 – infrastructure project or class of infrastructure projects (formally) designated by the Ministry; these can include planning, development, construction, modification, and dismantling of infrastructure.
- Category 2 – “provincially significant” infrastructure projects.

The engagement's first phase provides a detailed online survey proposing qualification criteria and seeking public comments by September 30, 2025:

- Types of projects qualifying as “Provincially Significant” projects. Proposed types consist of critical minerals and mining, food or water supply, human health and safety, energy security, public infrastructure, supply chain capacity, post-disaster recovery, environmental restoration, provincial climate goals, and housing.
- Core requirements to be met by each project: project readiness, the problems blocking progress to be addressed using the Infrastructure Act, and project materiality (cost over \$100 million and/or significant public infrastructure project).
- At least one additional benefit: trade diversification,

access to new markets, supply chain security, replacing U.S. imports, improving community livability, or achieving labour goals.

Phase 2 - How to define “qualified professionals” whose work can be relied upon in accelerated reviews

Several BC laws and regulations already recognize categories of qualified professionals whose judgments can be relied upon in specified contexts, and the Ministry is proposing a “Qualified Professional (QP) Reliance Model” to define which professionals to designate as eligible to certify that one or more of the standards required to issue a permit have been met. The second engagement phase seeks comments on which groups or professionals might qualify under Bill 15, asking questions about:

- Project elements qualifying for QP treatment, considering complexity, scope, technical aspects, etc.
- Professional qualifications (education, licensing, membership) and/or personal knowledge (including traditional knowledge in First Nations contexts).
- Oversight, conflicts of interest and complaint procedures
- Registry and/or periodic reporting requirements.

Phase 2 provides another online survey, with responses due by October 31, 2025.

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Phase 3 - How to define an expedited environmental assessment process

The Ministry states that it will release a third phase of questions in September, with comments due by March 2026.

What Happens Now?

Organizations and individuals with interests in potential infrastructure development in British Columbia have opportunities to try to shape the Ministry's implementation of the Infrastructure Projects Act by participating in the online surveys described above and in public meetings and other opportunities under development.

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After these engagements, the Ministry should prepare regulatory and administrative materials that will allow for Royal Assent to activate the remainder of Bill 15; until then, the framework for infrastructure development in British Columbia is necessarily uncertain. 

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jon Elliott's multifaceted career spans consulting, managing compliance projects for organizations like Applied Materials and the City of Berkeley; writing, including the creation of legal handbooks and blogs, and contributions to 24 book-length resources for attorneys, EH&S managers, and trainers; and teaching, with a distinguished record of instructing courses and delivering presentations on EH&S compliance, earning him the "Outstanding Teacher" title in 1994. Jon has a diverse educational background, including a Juris Doctor from the University of California's Boalt Hall School of Law (1981), a Master of Public Policy from UC Berkeley's Goldman School of Public Policy (1980), and a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Princeton University (1977). He actively contributes to professional and community organizations, having served as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the GSPP Alumni Association and as a member of the Executive Committee of the State Bar of California's Environmental Law Section, where he chaired the Legislative Committee.

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