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STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY  
LAND USE PLANNING COMMISSION  
18 ELKINS LANE, 22 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0022

JANET T. MILLS  
GOVERNOR

AMANDA E. BEAL  
COMMISSIONER

January 22, 2026

Senator Rachel Talbot Ross, Senate Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry  
Maine Senate  
3 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

Representative William D. Pluecker, House Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry  
Maine House of Representatives  
2 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

***RE: 2025 Annual Performance Report – Maine Land Use Planning Commission (LUPC)***

Dear Senator Talbot Ross and Representative Pluecker:

Enclosed is the Maine Land Use Planning Commission's Annual Performance Report for 2025. This report, required by 12 M.R.S. §685-H:

- Contains permit processing data, including processing times;
- Provides the status of the Commission's regional planning and zoning initiatives;
- Describes staff and Commission training initiatives; and
- Identifies the Commission's goals for 2026.

We hope you find this report informative. I am prepared to present it to the Committee and answer any questions you or your fellow Committee members may have. Please contact the Commission's Acting Director, Benjamin Godsoe, if you would like to schedule a report presentation.

Sincerely,

Millard Billings, Chair  
Land Use Planning Commission

Enclosure

cc: Benjamin Godsoe, Acting Executive Director, Land Use Planning Commission  
Amanda E. Beal, Commissioner, Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF)  
Jo D. Saffair, Deputy Commissioner, DACF  
Nancy McBrady, Deputy Commissioner, DACF  
Judy East, Director, Bureau of Resource Information and Land Use Planning, DACF  
Emily Horton, Director of Policy and Community Engagement, DACF

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# LAND USE PLANNING COMMISSION

## ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

### CALENDAR YEAR 2025



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Commissioner

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## Introduction

### A. Purpose of the Commission

The Maine Land Use Planning Commission (Commission or LUPC), programmatically residing in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry's (DACF) Bureau of Resource Information and Land Use Planning (BRILUP), serves as the planning and zoning authority for the unorganized and deorganized areas of the state. These areas include all townships (424), most plantations (27), and some towns (7). Collectively referred to as the Commission's service area or the Unorganized Territories (UT), these areas either lack local government or have chosen not to administer land use controls at the local level.

Along with carrying out its planning and zoning responsibilities, the Commission issues numerous permits for development projects, including building permits for home construction and camp renovations, as well as permits for activities that have the potential to impact natural resources, such as water bodies or wetlands. For larger development projects requiring Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) review under the Site Location of Development Law, Maine Metallic Mineral Mining Act, or qualifying as grid-scale wind energy development, the Commission certifies whether proposed land uses are allowed and whether proposed development activities comply with applicable Commission land use standards not considered by DEP.

Serving the UT and helping guide land use in these areas represents a unique challenge. These diverse areas cover over half the state, encompassing approximately 10.5 million acres, and include the largest contiguous undeveloped area in the northeast. The UT includes more than forested areas and undeveloped land. The Commission serves rural communities, villages, farmland areas, and coastal islands (*e.g.*, Monhegan and Matinicus). Most of the land in the UT is privately owned. While eight counties (Aroostook, Piscataquis, Somerset, Penobscot, Washington, Franklin, Oxford, and Hancock) account for approximately 97 percent of the geographic area, 13 of Maine's 16 counties include some areas served by the Commission. (See map of the Commission's service area on the following page.)

The UT is essential to the vitality of the State and local economies, contains critical natural resources, is home to many people, and is enjoyed by Maine residents and visitors pursuing outdoor recreation activities, including hunting, fishing, boating, and hiking.



Little Moose Unit, photo by G. Trafelet

**Northern Region**

45 Radar Rd.  
Ashland, ME 04732-3600  
Tel. (207) 435-7969 (Billie)  
Tel. (207) 435-7970 (Meagan)

Billie Theriault - EL - Supervisor  
Meagan Westfall - EL II - Residential/Development

**Moosehead Region**

8 Moosehead Lane  
Suite 107  
Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426  
Tel. (207) 816-0143 (Debbie)  
Tel. (207) 530-3888 (Ruby)  
Tel. (207) 349-0941 (Heidi)  
Tel. (207) 557-2874 (Sarah)

Debbie Kaczowski - Enforcement Coordinator  
Ruby Goodman - Enforcement Specialist  
Heidi Gaffney - EL II - Commercial  
Sarah Robinson - EL I - Residential

**Western Region**

932 US Route 2 East  
Wilton, ME 04294  
Tel. (207) 670-7493 (Rachel)  
Tel. (207) 670-7492 (Jennifer)

Rachel Hauber - EL II - Commercial  
Jennifer Larson - EL I - Residential

**Downeast Region**

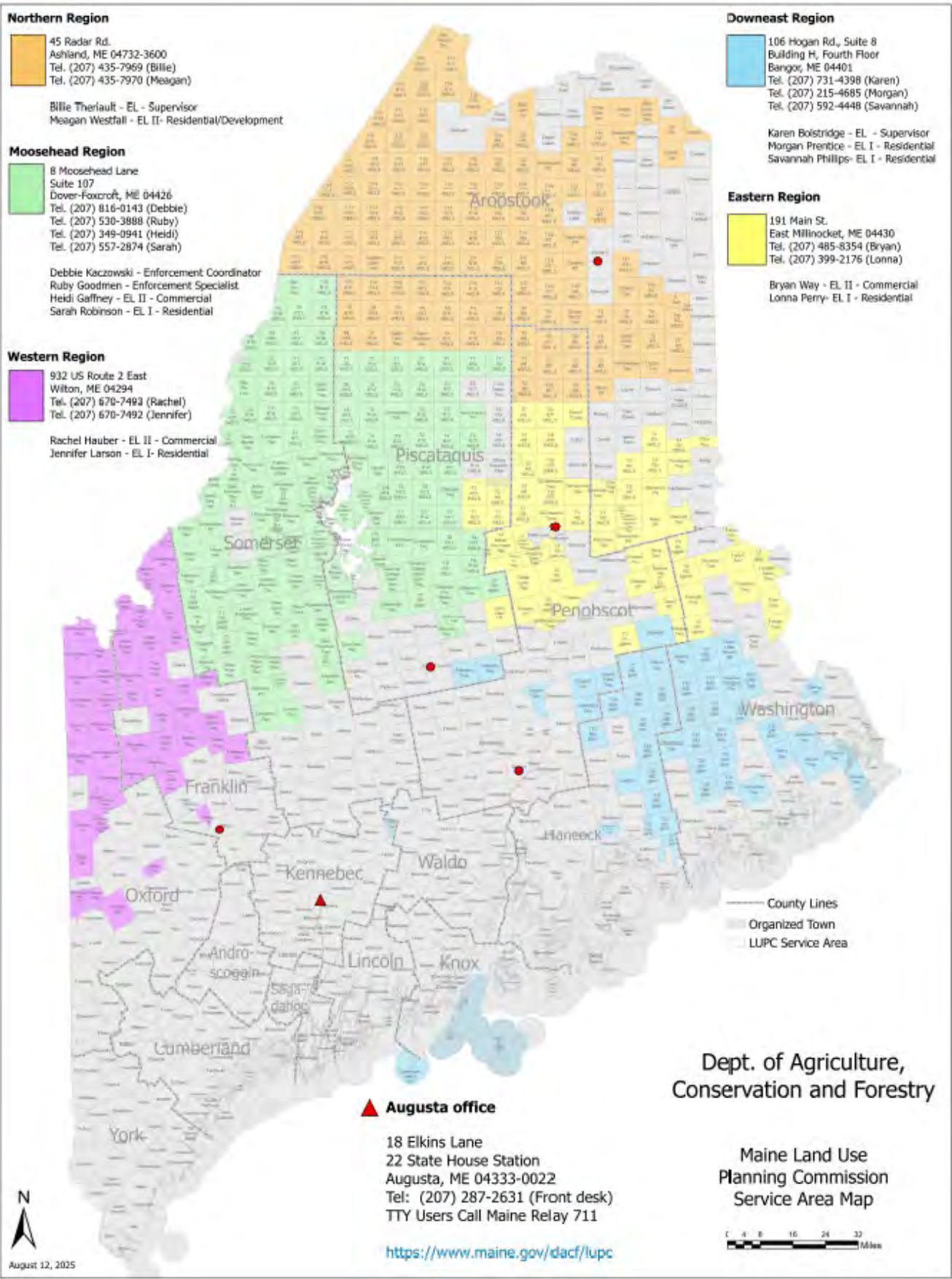
106 Hogan Rd., Suite 8  
Building H, Fourth Floor  
Bangor, ME 04401  
Tel. (207) 731-4398 (Karen)  
Tel. (207) 215-4685 (Morgan)  
Tel. (207) 592-4448 (Savannah)

Karen Boistridge - EL - Supervisor  
Morgan Prentice - EL I - Residential  
Savannah Phillips - EL I - Residential

**Eastern Region**

191 Main St.  
East Millinocket, ME 04430  
Tel. (207) 485-8354 (Bryan)  
Tel. (207) 399-2176 (Lonna)

Bryan Way - EL II - Commercial  
Lonna Perry - EL I - Residential



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Dept. of Agriculture,  
Conservation and Forestry

Maine Land Use  
Planning Commission  
Service Area Map



August 12, 2025

## **B. Reporting Requirements**

Title 12, section 685-H requires the Commission to provide an annual performance report to the Legislature. This section states:

1. **Report due.** *By January 15, 2013 and by January 15th annually thereafter, the commission shall report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over conservation matters regarding the commission's performance under this subchapter for the previous year and goals for the coming year.*
2. **Report components.** *The report must include:*
  - a. *The number of permits processed for the previous calendar year, by category;*
  - b. *A summary of preapplication consultation activities;*
  - c. *The average time for rendering a decision, with goals for improving processing times;*
  - d. *The status of regional planning and zoning initiatives, with goals for the calendar year; and*
  - e. *A description of staff and commission training initiatives to ensure increased customer service and consistency in application of commission rules and regulations, with goals for the calendar year ahead.*
3. **Public meeting.** *The chair of the commission shall present the annual performance report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over conservation matters at a meeting of that committee. The committee shall give the public an opportunity to comment on the performance report at this meeting.*

This document constitutes LUPC's annual performance report for the calendar year 2025. This is the twelfth year the Commission has provided the report.

## **C. LUPC Website**

Additional information regarding the Commission's responsibilities and activities can be found on the Commission's website: [www.maine.gov/dacf/lupc/](http://www.maine.gov/dacf/lupc/). The website includes lists of current staff and Commission members, maps of the Commission's service area and land use districts, statutes and rules administered by the Commission, a calendar and meeting materials, reports and publications, online forms for submitting general inquiries or complaints, and downloadable application forms. It also includes information about projects of significant public interest and other helpful resources.

## **II. Permitting**

### **A. Permits Processed by Category**

The Commission issues permits for a range of activities, including shoreline alterations and the construction of new dwellings, campgrounds, certain roads, subdivisions, and utility lines. While they are not permitting actions, the Commission also reviews and acts on matters such as zoning petitions. These other actions are included in the permitting summary tables for this annual report. However, not all development or Commission assistance is captured in these

tables or this report. Many activities, such as developing certain accessory structures and agricultural activities, are allowed without a permit, subject to standards. Although the Commission assists the public with understanding any requirements applicable to these activities, where a permit is not required, this activity is not reflected below.

Since 2012, larger projects within Maine’s unorganized and deorganized areas have been permitted by DEP (i.e., projects triggering DEP review under the Site Location of Development Law, Maine Metallic Mineral Mining Act, or qualifying as grid-scale wind energy development). For these projects, LUPC must certify to DEP that the proposed development: 1) is an allowed use within the subdistrict or subdistricts in which it is proposed, and 2) meets any land use standard established by the Commission not considered in DEP's permit review. A LUPC certification is not a permit. However, for the purposes of this report and the calculation of processing times presented, certifications are included among the permits grouped under the heading "All Other" in the tables below.

Tables 1 through 4 present the number of permits processed by permit type. Only complete applications are processed. If the Commission receives an incomplete application, it will be returned to the applicant. In 2025, the Commission received 75 building permit applications, 7 development permit applications, and 36 applications in the "All Other" category that were never completed. Incomplete applications are not reflected in the following tables. Tables 1 and 4 also show the type of action (i.e., outcome) on various types of permits. Appendix B describes each type of permit and action listed in these tables.

**Table 1. Permits Processed by Category and Outcome<sup>1</sup>, 2025**

Permit Type	Permit Type Name	Count by Action Type					TOTAL
		Approved	Approved / Denied in-part	Denied	Application Withdrawn	Application Returned	
BP	Building Permit	457		1	1	9	468
DP	Development Permit	33				2	35
<b>All Other</b>		<b>60</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>66</b>
BCP	Bridge Construction Permit	1				1	2
FOP	Forest Operation Permit	7					7
GP	Great Pond Permit	18			1	2	21
HP	Hydropower Permit						0
LUC	Land Use Certification						0
RP	Road Construction Permit	2					2
SA	Shoreland Alteration Permit	2					2
SD	Service Drop Permit	20				1	21
SLC	Site Law Certification	3					3
SP	Subdivision Permit	1			1		2
ULP	Utility Line Permit	2					2
WL	Wetland Alterations Permit	2					2
ZP	Zoning Petition	2					2
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>569</b>

<sup>1</sup> LUPC’s permitting data represent activities that required permit approval from LUPC when applicants sought permit approval. Commission initiated actions, such as Commission initiated rezonings, are not included in permitting data. Generally, approval is sought prior to commencement of the activity requiring a permit. In some instances, individuals apply for after-the-fact permits for activity previously undertaken without the required permit. This table and the following tables include after-the-fact permits in the totals. Additionally, some activities do not require permit approval. Permitting trends only loosely reflect development trends, in that an unknown number of activities permitted by LUPC may not have been started or completed. Additionally, some activities may have been completed without a permit where a permit was required.

**Table 2. Permits Processed by Category and County, 2025**

Permit Type	Permit Type Name	Total Actions by County													TOTAL
		AR	FR	HA	KE	KN	LI	OX	PE	PI	SA	SO	WA	WL	
BP	Building Permit	90	109	14	1	2		23	75	62		57	35		468
DP	Development Permit	5	6			3	1	1	3	11		4	1		35
All Other		9	16	2	0	1	2	2	14	9	0	6	5	0	66
BCP	Bridge Construction Permit								1				1		2
FOP	Forest Operation Permit		2						3	1		1			7
GP	Great Pond Permit	4	6			1			3	3		2	2		21
HP	Hydropower Permit														0
LUC	Land Use Certification														0
RP	Road Construction Permit		1							1					2
SA	Shoreland Alteration Permit		1					1							2
SD	Service Drop Permit	4	2	1				1	6	2		3	2		21
SLC	Site Law Certification	1		1					1						3
SP	Subdivision Permit		2												2
ULP	Utility Line Permit		1							1					2
WL	Wetland Alterations Permit						2								2
ZP	Zoning Petition		1							1					2
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>569</b>

**Table 3. Permits Processed by Category and Year, 2020 through 2025**

Permit Type	Permit Type Name	Total Applications Processed					
		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
BP	Building Permit	503	526	511	462	422	468
DP	Development Permit	44	41	45	40	30	35
All Other		112	114	94	81	77	66
BCP	Bridge Construction Permit	3	4		3	2	2
FOP	Forest Operation Permit	4	11	5	4	3	7
GP	Great Pond Permit	52	42	37	34	29	21
HP	Hydropower Permit	1	0	1	0	0	0
LUC	Land Use Certification	0			0	1	0
RP	Road Construction Permit	5	5	3	0	2	2
SA	Shoreland Alteration Permit	6	4	5	9	7	2
SD	Service Drop Permit	26	29	18	21	15	21
SLC	Site Law Certification	4	3	3	0	2	3
SP	Subdivision Permit	5	10	10	3	4	2
ULP	Utility Line Permit	1	1	1	3	3	2
WL	Wetland Alterations Permit	1	1		1	1	2
ZP	Zoning Petition	4	4	11	3	8	2
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>659</b>	<b>681</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>569</b>

In administering its land use standards, the Commission also issues a range of other determinations regarding land uses and development, including advisory rulings, boat launch notifications, certifications of compliance, coastal zone management area consistency reviews, letters of exemption, review and approval of certain activity permitted by the Maine Forest Service (MFS), and water quality certifications. While these actions do not involve the issuance of permits, they are official determinations made by the Commission. Table 4 presents the number of these determinations processed by type. Appendix B describes each type of action listed in Table 4.

**Table 4. Other Land Use Determinations, 2025**

Determination Type	Actions Processed
Advisory Rulings	4
Boat Launch Notifications	1
Certifications of Compliance	9
Coastal Zone Management Area Consistency Determinations	0
Letters of Exemption	0
Maine Forest Service Review and Approvals	0
Water Quality Certifications (not incorporated in other permits)	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>

## B. Average Processing Times



The Commission utilizes its Geographically Oriented Action Tracker (GOAT) database to manage and track permitting activities. Many stages of the permit review process are cataloged in GOAT. For example, an action status and date are entered when an application is filed, when an application is complete, when a final action or disposition occurs (*e.g.*, approval, denial, withdrawal of application), and when a certificate of compliance is issued. The permit processing time for rendering a decision can be calculated by comparing the date when an application is complete with the date of final action or disposition. The following figures and tables illustrate the processing times for the three main categories of permits – the same categories identified in the tables above:

- a. Building Permits (*i.e.*, residential development);
- b. Development Permits (*i.e.*, non-residential development); and
- c. All Other Permits.

Permit processing times may be affected by various factors, including the following:

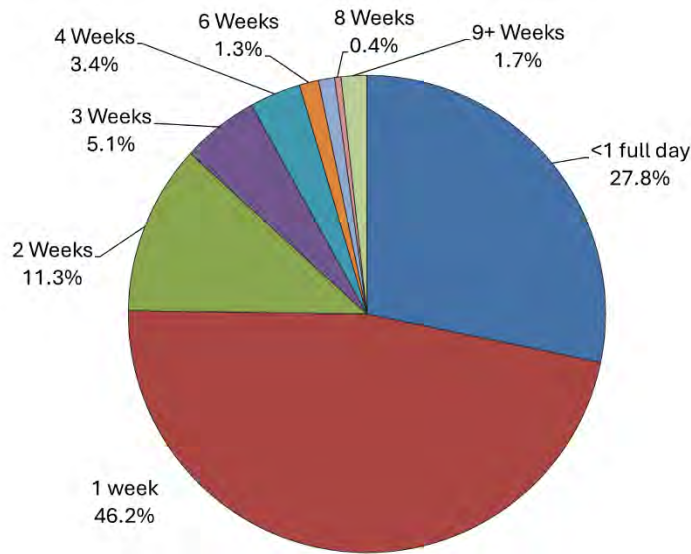
- Thorough and well-prepared applications can help expedite review.
- Staff experience and workload impact the time it takes to review and issue a permit.
- Some permit actions may be after-the-fact permits sought and issued after the development occurred without proper permit authorization. After-the-fact permits typically require additional review time due to the complexities of resolving existing development components that may not comply with applicable rules and standards.
- Permits that are denied typically involve longer review times due to the effort to identify an approvable alternative for the project. The same applies to withdrawn applications. Sometimes, an applicant may withdraw a proposal rather than proceed and obtain a formal denial.
- Permit processing times may include periods when applications were put on hold to await information from the applicant.
- Some permit processing times include the time required for review by outside agencies, notice periods preceding public comment, public comment periods, public hearings,

and the associated notice period, and presentation to the Commission for action at a monthly business meeting.

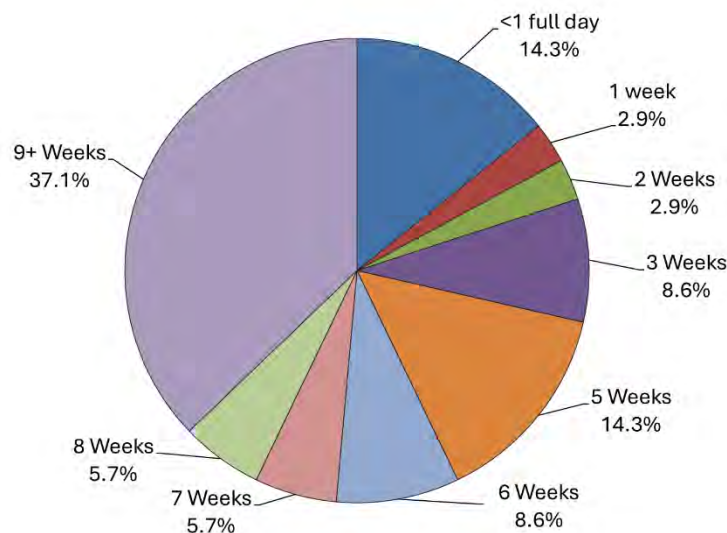
Figures A, B, and C show the percentage of permits processed within a given period. These figures show, for example:

- Building Permits – Of the 468 building permit applications, the Commission processed 28 percent in less than one full day and 74 percent in a week or less.
- Development Permits – Of the 35 development permit applications, the Commission processed 17 percent in a week or less and 29 percent in four weeks or less.
- All Other Permits – Of the 66 "All Other" applications, the Commission processed 44 percent in a week or less and 65 percent in four weeks or less.

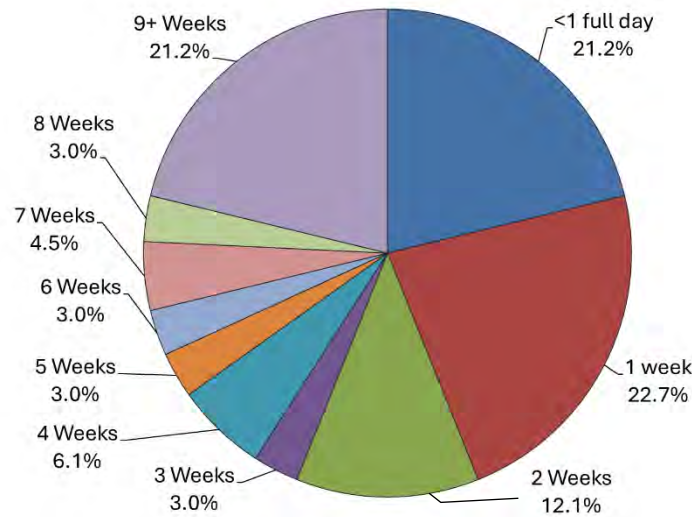
**Figure A. Permit Processing Times, 2025 - Building Permits**



**Figure B. Permit Processing Times, 2025 - Development Permits**



**Figure C. Permit Processing Times, 2025 - All Other Permits**



Tables 5 and 6 present the average and median processing times for 2025, as well as for the preceding five years, to provide context. The data for Table 5 calculations are the same data reflected in Figures A, B, and C above, with the exception of one development permit that, upon appeal, was remanded from the Commission back to the staff for reconsideration.<sup>2</sup> In each of the following three tables, for the specified category of permit:

- Average = the sum of the processing time for all permit actions divided by the number of actions
- Median = the processing time in the middle of the range of processing times for all permit actions

Where the Commission determines an application is complete and makes a final permitting decision on the same day, the processing time is less than one full day. In calculating the average and median permit processing times, permitting decisions made in less than one full day were assigned a processing time of zero days. A median processing time of less than one full day (*i.e.*, <1) means the Commission made a final permitting decision on at least half of the applications on the same day the application was deemed complete.

**Table 5. Permit Processing Times, 2025**

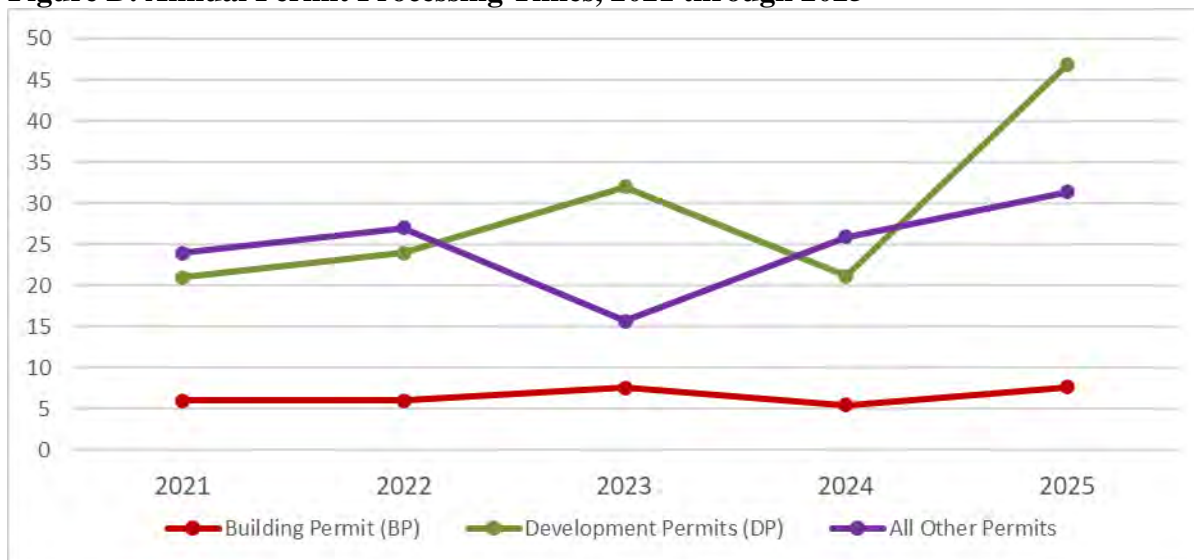
Permit Type	Processing Times (Days)	
	Average	Median
Building Permit (BP)	7.7	3.0
Development Permits (DP)	46.8	40.5
All Other Permits	31.4	12.0

<sup>2</sup> Development Permit DP 5137 authorized a proposed reconstruction of a non-hydro powered dam on Smith Pond in Indian Purchase Twp. The original staff decision was appealed to the Commission by a property owner on Smith Pond and then was remanded back to the staff for reconsideration, essentially combining the length of two application processes into one permit action. Therefore, DP 5137 had a processing time of 231 days and was removed from Table 5 and Figure D to provide a more representative average processing time for development permits.

**Table 6. Annual Permit Processing Times, 2020 through 2024**

Permit Type	2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Average (Days)	Median (Days)	Average (Days)	Median (Days)	Average (Days)	Median (Days)	Average (Days)	Median (Days)	Average (Days)	Median (Days)
Building Permit (BP)	5.7	<1	6.0	3.9	6.1	5	7.6	3.5	5.5	1.0
Development Permits (DP)	20	16.5	20.7	18.8	23.6	14.0	32	10	21.2	20.5
All Other Permits	20.9	<1	23.9	24	27	8.0	15.7	4	25.9	6.0

**Figure D. Annual Permit Processing Times, 2021 through 2025**



**C. Processing Time Goals**

Average permit processing times for the past year generally increased when compared to the previous year's and the previous five years' data, particularly for residential building and non-residential development permit applications. Although many factors affect permit processing times, the Commission believes two key factors were at play. First, there was an increase in building activity in the UT; the overall number of residential permitting actions in 2025 was up 11% from 2024 levels. Another factor was the overall level of experience of LUPC permitting staff, who issue permits, work directly with applicants, answer questions, and provide customer service to property owners as needed. Limited experience with the Commission's rules and practices can impact processing times during a busy construction season, when the overall volume of general inquiries and complaints increases along with permitting workloads.

LUPC has two highly experienced Environmental Licensing Supervisors; however, front-line staff positions (Environmental Licensing Specialists I and II) have experienced frequent turnover in recent years. Since 2022, the agency has completed 20 separate hiring processes for 11 positions that involve direct permitting or enforcement work. This figure includes multiple turnovers of certain positions (*e.g.*, individuals may have been promoted or transferred to a different unit, creating a vacancy). Twelve of the 20 hiring processes occurred in 2023-24, and only one in 2025. The Permitting and Compliance Division was fully staffed for the majority of 2025; however, four of the eleven field staff had been with the agency for less than a year during the busy building season between June and October. Except for the two highly experienced Environmental Licensing Supervisors, staff members who issue permits have been at LUPC for an average of 2.4 years. This year differed from the agency's experience in 2024,

when the higher vacancy rate forced supervisors to take on more permits themselves and spend less time in their supervisory roles, a trend that is not sustainable over the long term. There was also a lower overall volume of permitting activity in 2024.

The goal for issuing building permit applications is less than 14 days, and the goal for issuing development permit applications is less than 60 days from the date of application completion. The agency met those goals in 2025. Considering the enormous number of inquiries from the public that the agency continues to receive, the increasingly complex land division histories that staff must review, the large and growing issues around enforcement, and most importantly, the time required to recruit and train new staff, the reported permit processing times indicate continued staff efficiency and represent agency actions that meet agency goals and remain within reasonable timeframes. However, development permit processing times increased significantly from 2024, from an average of 21.2 days to an average of 46.8 days. The agency will work on reducing processing times in 2026.

With time, new staff will gain experience and confidence and become more proficient in issuing permits. Supervisory staff also continue to focus on developing training materials to help new employees as they gain experience, as well as tools to increase permitting efficiency and enhance customer service. Two upcoming projects may also help reduce processing times. A proposed simplification to the fee schedule for residential building permit applications is expected to take effect in 2026.<sup>3</sup> The proposed change would institute a flat fee rate for common projects that do not require extensive review by LUPC staff. Additionally, the Commission is excited to partner with organizations piloting regional code enforcement programs in rural Maine. Such a program will assist with site inspections for projects in locations where travel from LUPC offices would be time-consuming and inefficient.

#### **D. Pre-application Consultation Summary**

Commission staff routinely meet with prospective applicants to provide assistance and guidance regarding the application process via pre-application consultations. These include meetings on-site, in the office, on the telephone, and in hybrid formats. Staff held numerous pre-application meetings with various development permit applicants who had larger, more complex projects. Staff also provided unofficial but documented opinions for more complex matters through advisory rulings (see Table 4 for 2025 data).

Additionally, the LUPC has developed procedures that allow an applicant to request a public pre-application consultation meeting with the Commissioners to discuss a project. This option is provided for in [Public Law 2011, chapter 682](#), and staff notify potential applicants of this option. In 2025, the Commission received no requests to hold public pre-application consultation meetings.

### **III. Planning and Zoning**

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<sup>3</sup> This major substantive rulemaking was provisionally adopted by the Commission on 10/8/2025 and is currently under consideration for ratification by the 132<sup>nd</sup> Maine Legislature.

## **A. Regional Planning and Zoning**

Legislation enacted in 2012 directed LUPC to "initiate prospective zoning in the unorganized and deorganized areas of the State" and to "coordinate prospective zoning in cooperation with efforts of local planning organizations and regional planning and development districts." P.L. 2011, ch. 682, §34. Over the past twelve years, the Commission has worked to fulfill this mandate through extensive community outreach, Community Guided Planning and Zoning (CGPZ) initiatives in Aroostook County, Washington County, and Western Maine, as well as the Moosehead Regional Planning Project. The Commission has reported on these efforts in past annual performance reports. Insights gained by the Commission through these past regional planning initiatives across multiple regions continue to inform the Commission's work with local communities and regional partners throughout the jurisdiction.

## **B. Regional Planning Goals**

The Commission continues its work on updating the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The pre-planning process helps identify variations among regions within the service area in terms of trends and issues, enabling the Commission to tailor the planning process more effectively to each region. Commission staff will also continue its outreach to residents of coastal islands in the Commission's service area and work with regional partners to address issues related to sea level rise and coastal hazards. Building stronger relationships with regional planning organizations that serve areas within and adjacent to the UT remains a high priority, and LUPC staff routinely participate in quarterly meetings with regional planning organizations from around the state. LUPC staff remain available to assist with future community-driven planning processes in any region should stakeholders propose them, provided the agency has the resources to engage effectively in such a process.

## **IV. Training**

### **A. Staff Training**

In 2025, Commission staff attended internal and external training sessions and workshops to expand staff knowledge and help deliver quality customer service. Staff sought training across multiple topic areas, including:

- Short-term Rentals and Local Government
- Staying Positive While Performing Difficult Client Service Work
- University of Cornell Cooperative Extension Forest Connect Webinar
- Wabanaki REACH Training
- Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) Ordinary High Water Mark Manual Training
- Subdivision Standards Training
- Natural Hazards and Land Use Planning
- 2025 Maine Sustainability and Water Conference
- LUPC Enforcement Program Training for all staff

- Maine Construction General Permit Training with DEP
- Municipal Planning Assistance Program (MPAP) Planning Basics Webinars, including Floodplain Management and Shoreland Zoning
- Maine Association of Wetland Scientists (MAWS) and Maine Association of Professional Soil Scientists (MAPSS) Annual Field Workshop: Deciphering Soils, Vegetation, and Protected Natural Resources on Glacial Landforms in Maine's Katahdin Region
- Time Management Principles
- 2025 Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association (NNECAPA) Conference
- Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Our Shores training
- Office of Information Technology (OIT) Computer Security Training
- Adjudicatory Proceedings
- Pay, Recruit, Inform, Support, and Manage (PRISM) Human Resources online system training

#### Staff training highlights in 2025:

*Subdivision Standards Training* – LUPC planning staff designed a day-long training to help familiarize newer planning, permitting, and compliance staff with the details and nuances of LUPC's subdivision rules. The training provided a comprehensive review of current subdivision design standards, including definitions, various subdivision types, and design standards for key components such as roads, building envelopes, and open space. The interactive session included small group work applying LUPC subdivision standards to sample sites and putting project review staff in the shoes of developers or property owners. Staff members left the training with a better understanding of the considerations and requirements for subdivisions, which will enhance customer service for this type of development and help ensure the consistent application of rules across regions.

*Maine Association of Wetland Scientists/Maine Association of Professional Soil Scientists Annual Field Workshop: Deciphering Soils, Vegetation, and Protected Natural Resources on Glacial Landforms in Maine's Katahdin Region* – This two-day workshop provided hands-on experience identifying potential vernal pools, determining high-water marks, identifying streams, determining facultative upland (FACU in the Cowardin system) wetland status, and determining the seasonal high-water table. It also introduced staff to soil pits, soil classification, and the terminology commonly used on the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) HHE200 forms, which are a threshold requirement that LUPC staff review as part of permit processing. Day one included self-guided visits to field stations followed by an evening presentation on the glacial geology, landforms, and parent materials of the Millinocket region. Day two included in-depth field visits and group discussions. In addition to providing relevant topical content, this workshop also offered opportunities for LUPC staff to network with professionals in the field.

*Staying Positive While Performing Difficult Client Service Work* – Building on the Conflict Transformation training in 2024, on March 5, 2025, Commission staff attended a virtual training webinar coordinated through the Maine Living Resources program. The training was designed to harness positive outcomes and effects that come with difficult customer service

work, without letting the negative aspects of the job become overwhelming. Staff members learned techniques to ensure that difficult situations do not have a lasting impact, became more aware of workplace stress, and acquired skills to effectively manage their emotions even during the most challenging times.

*Maine DEP Non-Point Training Center: FALL 2025 OUR SHORE: Shoreline Stabilization Practitioner Roundtable and Q&A (Applying Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) to Shoreline Erosion)* – This full-day event brought together contractors, engineers, landscapers, municipal officials, state regulatory staff, and community leaders to explore NBS for inland and coastal shoreline erosion. LUPC staff learned how to apply living shoreline designs to protect property, restore habitats, and improve water quality. The training also included: use of the OUR SHORE Guide, information sharing on streamlined permitting approaches, advanced certification opportunities, and interactive sessions with experts in geology, fish and wildlife, engineering, and plants.

## **B. Commission Training**

All new Commissioners receive an orientation/training session before their first meeting. This orientation involves a discussion of the controlling statutory and regulatory provisions, the functions the Commission and its staff serve, and the various resources that a Commissioner may refer to for assistance. In addition, orientation includes a discussion led by an Assistant Attorney General on the legal roles and responsibilities of Commissioners.

The Commission schedules agenda items at its regular monthly meetings that serve as training and annual continuing education in accordance with 12 M.R.S. §685(H). Training topics in 2025 included:

- Information sessions related to the update of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan – 2025 topics included Forest Resources, Flooding Hazards and Resiliency, and Conservation and Wildlife;
- Overview of the Enforcement and Compliance Policy – Voluntary Compliance Work with Landowners;
- Overview of the LUPC Community Guided Planning and Zoning program; and
- Municipal Deorganization and Efforts by Communities to Assume Local Land Use Control – overview, history, and the Commission’s role and responsibilities.

Training sessions and workshops were noticed on the Commission's meeting agendas and were open to Commission staff and the public.

## **C. Training Goals**

In 2026, Commission staff will continue to attend internal and external training sessions and workshops to improve efficiency, expand the staff’s knowledge base, and help deliver quality customer service. Training for 2026 will focus on two areas:

- Continued curation of internal resources and training materials to improve the consistency of rule interpretations and services for property owners throughout the LUPC service area (*e.g.*, orientation manuals, topic-based instructional resources or videos, and a library of regulatory interpretations); and
- Cross-training with other state agencies to improve efficiencies, including specific training with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (DIFW related to protected natural resources and development review).

New Commissioners will continue to receive an orientation/training session before their first meeting. Additional Commission training will include more informational sessions related to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan update (*e.g.*, recreation, housing and development, water resources, among others). Further training will be coordinated based on proposed planning and rulemaking activities, as well as any pending complex or controversial permit applications for which the Commission will be the decision-maker.

**Attachments:**

**A. LUPC Commissioners as of December 31, 2025**

The Land Use Planning Commission is a nine-member citizen board with county and gubernatorial appointees. Eight of the seats are filled by the counties with the most acreage within the unorganized and deorganized areas of the state. Each of the following counties (listed from largest to smallest in terms of qualifying acreage) is responsible for filling one seat: Aroostook, Piscataquis, Somerset, Penobscot, Washington, Franklin, Oxford, and Hancock. The Governor fills the final seat on the board.

The qualifications an individual must possess to serve on the Commission and the appointment process for both counties and the Governor are set in statute, 12 M.R.S. §683-A.

The following table shows who currently fills each seat on the Commission and who has appointed this individual. (Note: seat #8 has been removed.)

<b>Seat No.</b>	<b>Commissioner</b>	<b>Appointing Authority</b>	<b>Appointed</b>	<b>Term Expiration</b>
1	Perry Ellsworth	Governor	10/6/2024	7/9/2028
2	Millard Billings (Chair)	Hancock	11/5/2024	7/9/2028
3	Peter Pray	Penobscot	7/9/2021	7/9/2025 <sup>4</sup>
4	Vacant	Washington <sup>5</sup>	-	-
5	Lee Smith	Oxford	4/24/2024	11/4/2027
6	Thomas DuBois	Franklin	2/20/2024	8/20/2027
7	Gwendolyn Hilton, Vice-chair	Somerset	7/30/2023	7/29/2027
9	Don Tardie	Aroostook	4/16/2025	3/13/2029
10	Jenny Ward	Piscataquis	05/23/2025	05/22/2029

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<sup>4</sup> Commissioner Pray was re-appointed by Penobscot County on June 10, 2025. The Maine Senate voted to confirm the appointment on January 13, 2026. Commissioner Pray has not yet been sworn in and officially resumed his appointment.

<sup>5</sup> Washington County appointed Wayne Jones to the Commission on December 1, 2025. The Maine Senate voted to confirm the appointment on January 13, 2026. As of this report, Commissioner Jones has not yet been sworn in to officially join the Commission.

## B. Types of LUPC Actions and Permits

### Action Types

Each application the Maine Land Use Planning Commission receives is reviewed and results in a final action or disposition. Final action or disposition includes the following outcomes:

- *Approved* – The proposed activity meets the necessary standards; the staff or the Commission issues a decision (*i.e.*, permit) indicating approval.
- *Approved / Denied in part* – Parts of the proposed activity meet the required standards and are approved, and parts of the proposed activity do not meet the required standards and are denied. Staff or the Commission issue a decision (*i.e.*, permit) indicating the approved and denied components.
- *Denied* – The proposed activity does not meet the required standards; staff or the Commission issues a decision (*i.e.*, denial).
- *Application Withdrawn* – The applicant chooses to withdraw their application before final action by staff or the Commission. The application is returned, and no final action is issued by staff or the Commission.
- *Application Returned* – The application is incomplete, and the applicant has made insufficient effort to address the issue(s). The application is returned, and no final action is issued by staff or the Commission.

### Permit Types & Land Use Determinations

The Commission utilizes a range of permit types to track and document various permitting actions and land use determinations. Each action includes the permit type and number (*e.g.*, AR 95-001, BP 123, and ZP 456) at the top of the document, along with a corresponding entry in LUPC's GOAT database. The following summarizes the various types of permits and land use determinations:

Acronym	Permit Type	General Description <sup>6</sup>
AR	Advisory Ruling	A documented, yet informal, staff opinion is requested at the discretion of the landowner/developer. Applicants typically seek advisory rulings to obtain guidance on whether a permit is required for specified activities or to clarify the interpretation of specific provisions of the Commission's rules. ( <i>See</i> LAR and LOE below.)
BCP	Bridge Construction Permit	Permits for the construction, replacement, or repair of bridges.
BLN	Boat Launch Notice	A landowner notification to LUPC, after providing their intent to file notice, but before construction or repair of a boat launch, in accordance with Section 10.27, L of the Commission's <i>Land Use Districts and Standards</i> .
BP	Building Permit	Permits for activities associated with residential development that require a permit ( <i>e.g.</i> , activities involving a camp, a garage, or porches).

<sup>6</sup> [Chapter 10 of the Commission's rules, \*Land Use Districts and Standards\*](#), contains specific criteria and standards.

Acronym	Permit Type	General Description <sup>6</sup>
COC	Certificate of Compliance	A Commission document confirming the development, activity, and/or use complies with both the applicable rules and permits issued.
CZMA Consistency Determination	Coastal Zone Management Area Consistency Determination	A letter from LUPC staff regarding concurrence with the Federal Consistency Determination that proposed activities in Maine's coastal zone are consistent with the state core laws. (16 U.S.C. §1456(c) and 15 C.F.R, Part 930, Subpart C).
DP	Development Permit	Permits for non-residential development activities that require a permit ( <i>e.g.</i> , activities involving commercial sporting camps, retail stores, warehouses, mills, wind turbines, campgrounds, or resorts).
FOP	Forestry Operations Permit	Permits for forest operations that exceed the standards of Section 10.27, E of the Commission's <i>Land Use Districts and Standards</i> , or are located within a Development Subdistrict or the Mountain Area Protection (P-MA) Subdistrict. Depending upon the subdistricts involved, FOPs issued after July 15, 2013, may differ from FOPs issued before that date. (See MFS-RA below for more details.)
GP	Great Ponds Permit	Permits for activities affecting great ponds ( <i>i.e.</i> , bodies of standing water greater than 10 acres in size), and including permits for permanent docks, dredging, some boat launches/ramps, breakwaters, and retaining walls.
HP	Hydropower Permit	Permits for and relating to hydropower activities.
IFN	Intent to File Notice	A landowner notification to LUPC of their intent to file a Boat Launch Notification (BLN) described above, in accordance with Section 10.27, L of the Commission's <i>Land Use Districts and Standards</i> .
LAR	Letter of Exemption/Advisory Rulings	A letter from LUPC staff confirming the proposed activity is exempt from one or more provisions of the Commission's rules and, therefore, does not require permit approval, and a documented but informal staff opinion regarding other aspects of the specified project. LARs are issued when an Advisory Ruling and a Letter of Exemption are appropriate. (See AR and LOE herein.)
LOE	Letter of Exemption	A letter from LUPC staff confirming the proposed activity is exempt from one or more provisions of the Commission's rules and, therefore, does not require permit approval. Historically, LOEs were issued only for exempt utility lines; however, as of 2011, they are used for any proposed activity exempt from either the Commission's review or permit approval. (See AR and LAR above.)

Acronym	Permit Type	General Description <sup>6</sup>
LUC	Land Use Certification	A determination issued by the Commission for projects where the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is the lead permitting agency, but first requires certification from the Commission. In most cases, the Commission must certify whether the project is an allowed use and whether it conforms to its standards, which the DEP does not otherwise review. Projects that typically trigger an LUC include, but are not limited to, metallic mineral mining projects, solid waste disposal facilities, or alterations to protected natural resources.
MFS-RA	Maine Forest Service (MFS) Review and Approval	Review and approvals issued by the Commission for timber harvesting activities permitted by MFS (12 M.R.S. §685-A(12)). As of July 15, 2013, MFS regulates timber harvesting, land management roads, water crossings on/for land management roads, and gravel pits less than five acres in size in management and protection subdistricts. When these activities require a permit from MFS and are conducted in the Unusual Area Protection (P-UA), Recreation Protection (P-RR), and Special River Transition Protection (P-RT) subdistricts, Commission approval is required before MFS may issue a permit. In these cases, the Commission must determine whether or not the project conforms to its standards that MFS does not otherwise regulate. The Commission review primarily focuses on the impacts to existing uses, such as recreational, historical, cultural, or scenic resources, with the technical review of these activities remaining with MFS. When conducted in development subdistricts and development areas in Resource Plan Protection Subdistricts (P-RP), the Commission, not MFS, regulates these activities.
MISC	Miscellaneous	Applications returned or withdrawn before a permit type is assigned. In GOAT queries, these applications will be identified by the unpopulated "Permit_Type" and "ActionNumber" fields.
RP	Road Construction Permit	Permits for the construction, realignment, and substantial repair of roads (excluding land management roads).
SA	Shoreland Alteration Permit	Permits for activities affecting the shoreline of lakes, ponds, rivers, or streams ( <i>e.g.</i> , activities involving riprap, dredging, permanent docks, the intrusion of structures into or over a wetland or water body, and utility lines within or buried beneath a wetland or water body).

Acronym	Permit Type	General Description <sup>6</sup>
SD	Service Drop	Permits for certain utility lines. See Section 10.02 of the Commission's <i>Land Use Districts and Standards</i> . Some building permits (BPs) and development permits (DPs) include authorization for a service drop.
SP	Subdivision Permit	Permits to create new lots where the lot(s) do not qualify as exemptions, see Section 10.25, Q, 1 of the Commission's <i>Land Use Districts and Standards</i> .
SPDP	Subdivision/Development Permit	Permits for activities including subdivision and subsequent development of a land area. This permit type combines the review of and action on subdivision permits (SPs) and development permits (DPs). <i>This permit type is no longer in use.</i>
SLC	Site Law Certification	Certifications issued by the Commission for projects that trigger DEP review under the Site Law. In these cases, the Commission must certify whether the use is allowed in the subdistrict(s) in which it is proposed and whether the project conforms to Commission standards not otherwise effectively applied by DEP. Projects that typically trigger Site Law include larger subdivisions or commercial developments, as well as grid-scale wind or solar developments.
ULP	Utility Line Permit	Permits for certain utility lines ( <i>e.g.</i> , activities involving electric power transmission or distribution lines or telephone lines) that require a permit and, therefore, do not qualify as an exemption or as a Service Drop described above.
WL	Wetlands Alteration Permit	Permits related to the alteration of wetlands ( <i>e.g.</i> , activities involving filling or dredging of wetlands).
WQC	Water Quality Certification	A Commission action certifying that activities meet applicable water quality standards, pursuant to Section 401 of the U.S. Clean Water Act. <sup>7</sup> When permits are required, the Commission incorporates the WQC into the permit; stand-alone WQC actions represent certifications that did not also require permit approval ( <i>e.g.</i> , FERC relicensing).
ZP	Zoning Petition	Petitions to rezone a specified land area to another subdistrict(s). <i>See</i> Section 10.08 of the Commission's <i>Land Use Districts and Standards</i> .

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<sup>7</sup> [Executive Order #16 FY 91/92](#) designated LURC (now the LUPC) as the certifying agency to issue Section 401 Water Quality Certifications for all activities located wholly within its jurisdiction. Section 401 is a reference to the U.S. Clean Water Act, [33 U.S.C. §1341](#).