

Part 401 of DRBC's Regulations at Title 18 of the Code of Federal Regulations, as amended, is shown below. Additions are shown in red with underscore and deletions are shown in ~~red with strikethrough~~ compared to the text of the proposed amendments 18 C.F.R. Part 401 originally published on September 28, 2023. Asterisks represent no change to the *existing* regulation.

Editor's note: This final rule in part modifies DRBC's regulatory program fees by establishing a single fee for either a name change or a change of ownership of any project for which the Commission has previously issued a docket approval. (The two types of changes were previously assigned different fees.) Notably, in accordance with 18 C.F.R. 401.43(c), the fee for a name change or change of ownership is subject to an annual adjustment effective July 1 of each year. Please see the Commission's concurrent rulemaking at 89 F.R. 46322 (May 29, 2024) for the DRBC's regulatory program fees in effect as of July 1, 2024.

PART 401 – RULES OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

Subpart A – Comprehensive Plan

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401.8 Public projects under Article 11 of the Compact.

- (a) After a project of any Federal, State or local agency has been included in the Comprehensive Plan, no further action will be required by the Commission or by the agency to satisfy the requirements of Article 11 of the Compact, except as the Comprehensive Plan may be amended or revised pursuant to the Compact and this part. Any project which is materially changed from the project as described in the Comprehensive Plan will be deemed to be a new and different project for the purposes of Article 11 of the Compact. Whenever a change is made the sponsor shall advise the Executive Director, who will determine whether the change is deemed a material change within the meaning of this part.

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Subpart B – Water Resources Program

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401.22 Concept of the program.

The Water Resources Program, as defined and described in section 13.2 of the Compact, will be a reasonably detailed amplification of that part of the Comprehensive Plan which the Commission recommends for action. That part of the Program consisting of a presentation of the water resource needs of the Basin will be revised only at such intervals as may be indicated to reflect new findings and conclusions, based upon the Commission’s continuing planning programs.

401.23 Procedure.

The Water Resources Program will be prepared and considered by the Commission for adoption annually. Projects included in the Water Resources Program shall have been previously included in the Comprehensive Plan, except that a project may be added to both the Plan and the Program by concurrent action of the Commission. In such instances, the project's sponsor shall furnish the information listed in § 401.4(b) prior to the inclusion of the project in the Comprehensive Plan and Water Resources Program.

Subpart C – Project Review Under Section 3.8 of the Compact

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401.38 Form of referral by State or Federal agency.

Upon receipt of an application by any State or Federal agency for any project reviewable by the Commission under these regulations, if the project has not prior thereto been reviewed and approved by the Commission, such agency shall refer the project for review under Section-section 3.8 of the Compact in such form and manner as shall be provided by Administrative Agreement.

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401.39 Form of submission of projects.

- (a) *Submission constituting application.* Where a project is subject to review under Section 3.8 of the Compact, the submission shall be in accordance with such form of application as the Executive Director may prescribe and with such supporting documentation as the Executive Director may reasonably require for the administration of the provisions of the Compact. An application shall be deemed complete and the Commission’s review of the application may commence upon submission of the completed form in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section, and payment of the applicable fee as set forth in § 401.43 together with all balances due the Commission, if any, by the applicant or any member of its corporate structure, for unpaid fees, penalties, or interest.
- (b) *Submission of applications.* Application forms and accompanying submissions shall be filed in accordance with the filing instructions included on the application form.

- (c) *Availability of forms.* Any person may obtain a copy of any form prescribed for use in paragraph (a) of this section on the Commission's website, <https://www.drbc.gov>.

401.41 Limitation of approval; dormant applications.

- (a) *Extension ~~(no material change) by Executive Director.~~ (1) Term of approval; extension request.* For any Commission approval not assigned an expiration date, the Commission's approval shall expire five years from the approval date unless prior thereto the ~~Executive Director~~Commission extends the approval for an additional ~~five-year~~ period of up to five years, based upon a written request from the project sponsor accompanied by supporting documentation demonstrating ~~to the Executive Director's satisfaction~~ that the following criteria have been met:

~~(i) — Either:~~

~~(A) — The project sponsor has expended, at a minimum, the sum of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) or an amount representing substantial funds in relation to the cost of the project in reliance upon the Commission's approval; or~~

~~(B) — In the alternative, circumstances beyond the project sponsor's control (including but not limited to, pending legal challenges to local, State or Federal permits) have prevented the sponsor from expending an amount equal to either of the sums set forth in paragraph (a)(1)(i)(A) of this section;~~

(ii) No material changes to the project as approved are proposed;

(iii) The condition of the project site has not changed in a manner important to determining whether the project would substantially impair or conflict with the Commission's Comprehensive Plan; ~~and~~

~~(iii)~~ (iv) The Commission's Comprehensive Plan has not changed in a manner important to determining whether the project would substantially impair or conflict with the Comprehensive Plan; and

(iv) The project sponsor is diligently pursuing the project as shown by its planning, construction or project operational activities, its project expenditures, its efforts to secure government approvals necessary for the project, or its active participation in appeals of government decisions on its applications for government approvals. The project sponsor is not required by this subsection to conduct activities that it is not legally authorized to conduct or that it demonstrates would be unreasonable for it to conduct before obtaining all necessary final government approvals.

- (2) Denial of extension request. Otherwise, the ~~Executive Director~~extension request shall deny the request be denied, and the project sponsor may apply for renewal of its

approval under paragraph (b) of this section by a date to be established by the Commission. If the Commission denies the request for an extension pursuant to this section, the docket approval shall not thereafter be administratively continued automatically pursuant to paragraph (a)(5) of this section. The Commission may, however, in its discretion, administratively extend the docket approval in whole or in part for a period ending on or before the date on which the Commission renders a final decision on the sponsor's re-application under paragraph (b) of this section.

- (3) Public notice. The Commission will publish ~~Public notice of receipt of an~~ request for extension under this paragraph (a) and will provide notice at least ten days prior to the date of a business meeting at which ~~determination by the Executive Director~~ Commissioners may act on such request ~~pursuant to this paragraph (a) shall be provided no later than the Commission's next regularly scheduled public hearing or business meeting following the determination. A determination by the Executive Director pursuant to this section is appealable in accordance with subpart F of this part.~~
- (4) Public comment. An opportunity for written comment of at least ten days' length will be provided on a request for extension. The project sponsor will be afforded an opportunity to respond in writing to the comments received. A public hearing will be provided if three or more Commission members ask the Executive Director in writing to schedule one or vote during a public meeting of the Commission to provide one.
- (5) Administrative continuance. A docket that is the subject of a request for extension under paragraph (a) of this section filed at least 90 days before the docket's expiration shall be administratively continued pending the Commission's final action on the request in the event that such action occurs after the otherwise effective date of termination under this section.
- (6) Extensions no longer needed. If the activities authorized by a docket are limited to construction activities, an extension is no longer required once construction is complete; however, the expiration of the docket, including any approved extension, does not eliminate ongoing docket obligations expressly identified as such in the docket approval.
- (b) Review by Commissioners~~Re-application (material change).~~ If the Commission determines that the project sponsor has failed to demonstrate that in the view of the Executive Director ~~(or if appealed to the Commission pursuant to subpart F of this part, in the view of the Commission), one or more~~ no material changes to ~~a the~~ project as approved are proposed, ~~or if the Executive Director determines that any one or more of and that~~ the other criteria listed in paragraph (a)(1) of this section are ~~not~~ satisfied, the project sponsor must apply for renewal and any necessary modification of its approval in accordance with the customary application procedure for any docket renewal or approval.
- (c) Automatic termination of application. Any application that remains dormant (no proof of active pursuit of approvals) for a period of three years from date of receipt, shall be automatically

terminated without further action of the Commission. Any renewed activity following that date will require submission of a new application.

401.42 One Permit Program.

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(e) *Comprehensive Plan projects.* Articles 11 and 13 of the Compact require certain projects to be included in the Comprehensive Plan. To add a project not yet included in the Comprehensive Plan, the project sponsor shall submit a separate application to the Commission. If following its review and public hearing the Commission approves the addition of the project to the Comprehensive Plan, the Commission's approval will include such project requirements as are necessary under the Compact and ~~Commission regulations~~this part. All other project approvals that may be required from the Signatory Party Agency or the Commission under regulatory programs administered pursuant to this section may be issued through the One Permit Program. An application for renewal or modification of a project in the Comprehensive Plan that does not materially change the project may be submitted only to the Signatory Party Agency unless otherwise specified in the Administrative Agreement.

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401.43 Regulatory program fees.

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(b) * * *

(1) * * *

(ii) *Project requiring inclusion in the comprehensive plan.* Any project that in accordance with section 11 or section 13.1 of the Delaware River Basin Compact and DRBC regulations must be added to the Comprehensive Plan (also, "Plan"). In addition to any new project required to be included in the Plan, such projects include existing projects that in accordance with section 13.1 of the Compact are required to be included in the Plan and which were not previously added to the Plan. Any existing project that is materially changed from the project as described in the Plan shall be deemed to be a new and different project for purposes of this section.

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(4) * * *

(ii) *Late filed renewal application.* Any renewal application submitted fewer than 180 calendar days in advance of the expiration date or after such other date specified in the docket or permit or letter of the Executive Director for filing a

renewal application shall be subject to a late filed renewal application charge in excess of the otherwise applicable fee.

(iii) *Modification of a DRBC approval.* Following Commission action on a project, any material change to the project as approved shall require an additional application and accompanying fee. Such fee shall be calculated in accordance with paragraph (e) of this section and may be subject to an alternative review fee in accordance with paragraph (b)(3) of this section.

(iv) *Name change or change of ownership.* Each project with a docket or permit issued by the DRBC will be charged an administrative fee as set forth in paragraph (e) of this section if it undergoes a change in name or a “change in ownership” as that term is defined at § 420.31(e)(2) of this subchapter.

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Table 3 to § 401.43—Additional Fees

Proposed action	Fee	Fee maximum
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Name Change or Change of Ownership	\$1,917 ¹	

¹ Subject to annual adjustment in accordance with paragraph (c) of this section.

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Subpart H – Public Access to Records and Information

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401.103 Request for existing records.

(a) Any written request to the Commission for existing records not prepared for routine distribution to the public shall be deemed to be a request for records pursuant to the provisions of this part, whether or not the provisions of this part are mentioned in the request, and shall be governed by the provisions of this part.

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401.104 Preparation of new records.

The provisions of this part apply only to existing records that are reasonably described in a request filed with the Commission pursuant to the procedures herein established. The Commission shall not be required to prepare new records in order to respond to a request for information.

401.105 Indexes of certain records.

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(b) A copy of each such index is available at cost of duplication from the Records Access Officer.

401.106 Records Access Officer

The Executive Director shall designate a Commission employee as the Records Access Officer. The Records Access Officer shall be responsible for Commission compliance with the provisions of this part. All requests for agency records shall be sent to the Records Access Officer in a manner consistent with § 401.108(a).

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401.108 Filing a request for records.

(a) All requests for Commission records shall be submitted to the Records Access Officer on such forms as the Executive Director may prescribe, which shall be available on the Commission's website, <https://www.drbc.gov>, or by written request to the Commission, 25 Cosey Road, West Trenton, NJ 08628.

(b) * * *

(1) If the description is insufficient to locate the records requested, the Records Access Officer will so notify the person making the request and indicate the additional information needed to identify the records requested.

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(c) Upon receipt of a request for records, the Records Access Officer shall enter it in a public log (which entry may consist of a copy of the request). The log shall state the date and time received, the name and address of the person making the request, the nature of the records requested, the action taken on the request, the date of the determination letter sent pursuant to § 401.~~99(b)~~109(b), the date(s) any records are subsequently furnished, the number of staff-hours and grade levels of persons who spent time responding to the request, and the payment requested and received.

(d) A denial of a request for records, in whole or in part, shall be signed by the Records Access Officer. The name and title or position of each person who participated in the denial of a request for records shall be set forth in the letter denying the request. This requirement may be met by attaching a list of such individuals to the letter.

401.109 Time limitations.

(a) All time limitations established pursuant to this section shall begin as of the time at which a request for records is logged in by the Records Access Officer pursuant to § 401.~~98(e)~~108(c). An

oral request for records shall not begin any time requirement. A written request for records sent elsewhere within the Commission shall not begin any time requirement until it is redirected to the Records Access Officer and is logged in accordance with § 401.98(c)108(c). A request that is expected to involve fees in excess of \$50.00 will not be deemed received until the requester is promptly notified and agrees to bear the cost or has so indicated on the initial request.

- (b) Within 10 working days (excepting Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) after a request for records is logged by the Records Access Officer, the record shall be furnished or a letter shall be sent to the person making the request determining whether, or the extent to which, the Commission will comply with the request, and, if any records are denied, the reasons therefor.

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- (c) If any record is denied, the letter shall state the right of the person requesting such records to appeal any adverse determination to the Executive Director of the Commission. Such an appeal shall be filed within 30 days from receipt of the Records Access Officer's determination denying the requested information (where the entire request has been denied), or from the receipt of any information made available pursuant to the request (where the request has been denied in part). Within 20 working days (excepting Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) after receipt of any appeal, or any authorized extension, the Executive Director or the Executive Director's designee shall make a determination and notify the appellant of such determination. If the appeal is decided in favor of the appellant the requested information shall be promptly supplied as provided in this part. If on appeal the denial of the request for records is upheld in whole or in part, the appellant shall be entitled to appeal to the Commission at its regular meeting. In the event that the Commission confirms the Executive Director's denial the appellant shall be notified of the provisions for judicial review.

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401.110 Fees.

- (a) * * *
- (1) * * *
- (i) * * *
- (A) Processing requests for records;

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- (c) Payment shall be made by check or money order payable to "Delaware River Basin Commission" and shall be sent to the Records Access Officer.

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401.115 Discretionary disclosure by the Executive Director

- (a) The Executive Director may exercise discretion to disclose part or all of any Commission record that is otherwise exempt from disclosure pursuant to this part whenever the Executive Director determines that such disclosure is in the public interest, will promote the objectives of the Commission, and is consistent with the rights of individuals to privacy, the property rights of persons in trade secrets, and the need for the Commission to promote frank internal policy deliberations and to pursue its regulatory activities without disruption.
- (b) Discretionary disclosure of a record pursuant to this section shall invoke the requirement that the record shall be disclosed to any person who requests it pursuant to § 401.98108, but shall not set a precedent for discretionary disclosure of any similar or related record and shall not obligate the Executive Director to disclose any other record that is exempt from disclosure.

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Subpart I – General Provisions

401.121 Definitions

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- (e) **Material change** shall mean a change to a project previously approved by the Commission that is important in determining whether the project would substantially impair or conflict with the Commission’s comprehensive plan.
- (f) **Sponsor** shall mean any person authorized to initiate, construct or administer a project.

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