



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STATE OF CALIFORNIA • OFFICE OF GOVERNOR GAVIN NEWSOM

Office of Permit Assistance Annual Report

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OVERVIEW: OFFICE OF PERMIT ASSISTANCE:

The Office of Permit Assistance (OPA) is housed within the Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) to provide support to the business community by:

- Providing permitting and regulatory compliance assistance to businesses;
- Assisting businesses in accessing information and resources related to permitting and regulatory compliance;
- Providing mediation and third-party facilitation to resolve conflicts between applicants and permitting and regulatory entities; and
- Working with federal, state, regional, and local permitting and regulatory entities to exchange best practices and implement improvements to modernize permitting processes.

The following are highlights of OPA achievements during the reporting period of October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023:

- Resolution of a total of 2260 permitting inquiries.

Permit Assistance Type	Count
Complex Permit Mediation Projects	47
Complex Permit Identification Projects	150
Phone Calls – General Permit Inquiries	502
GO-Biz Help Desk Inquiries	1,561
Total	2,260

- Review and comment of 4 Standard Regulatory Impact Assessments (SRIA)
- Design, data validation and development of California Online Permit Assistance Tool (CalGOLD) 2.0, which assists in providing businesses the information they need to comply with environmental and other regulatory and permitting requirements
- Update of the following existing Quick Start Guides:
 - Mobile Food Truck
 - Freight & Trucking Industry
 - Quick Start Guide for Alcoholic Beverage Licenses
 - Business Consultants

PERMITTING ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES

The following sections detail significant activities of the OPA for the reporting period of October 1, 2022 September 30, 2023.

Regulatory Compliance Assistance

The OPA staff assists business owners in identifying permits and other regulatory requirements needed to start a new business or expand an existing one. Staff respond to business inquiries by email or phone and provide a list of regulatory entities and specific permitting requirements. Staff also coordinate pre-application meetings between business owners and the appropriate regulatory agencies to bring more clarity on more complex permitting requirements if this level of intervention is requested or if necessary.

In addition, OPA staff provide responses to requests submitted through the online California Business Portal Service Help Desk (<https://gobiz.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/requests/new>). Requests are typically resolved within 48 hours and require permit specialists to provide tailored permit identification information. Some requests may take significantly longer based on the complexity of the situation.

For this reporting period, OPA answered a total of 1,501 permitting inquiries received through the Help Desk. The chart below is a summary of the inquiries received by region:

CA Region	Count
Bay Area	282
Central & Eastern Sierra	13
Central Coast	50
Central San Joaquin Valley	65
Greater Sacramento	116
Inland Empire	87
Kern County	20
Los Angeles County	344
North San Joaquin Valley	10
North State	32
Not Available	303
Orange County	90
Redwood Coast	9
Southern Border	80
Grand Total	1,501

Permit Identification

During the reporting period, OPA staff received 150 requests that required more complex permit identification services. A complex request requires additional research and engagement with regulatory partners to ascertain permitting requirements and typically takes more than a day to resolve.

OPA staff also help identify permits and permit processes related to local, state, and federal permitting authorities.

A few case studies of engagement on permit identification services are highlighted below:

October 2022	<p>Polymer Engineering Company (Kern County)</p> <p>Background: In October 2022, a Polymer Engineering company contacted OPA for permit assistance. Their mission was to transform waste plastics into high value products. Technology played a critical role in the infrastructure of a circular polymer economy. OPA set up a meeting with the regulatory agencies and provided information regarding permits and the timelines etc.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: The company was struggling to ascertain what forms and permits would be required.</p>
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	<p>Achieved Result: OPA staff walked the company through the GO-Biz Quick Start Guide for businesses. OPA staff also connected the company with permitting specialists at various regulatory agencies.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 1 week</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California Department of Toxic Substance Control • California Department of Waterboards • California Air Resources Board • California Department of Resources, Recycling & Recovery (CalRecycle) • California Department of Tax & Fee Administration • California Franchise Tax Board • California Employment Development Department • California Department of Industrial Relations
<p>November 2022</p>	<p>Foreign-based Lawn Turf Company (Sacramento County)</p> <p>Background: In November 2022, a lawn turf company contacted OPA for permit assistance. According to the company, their product had ingredients that could protect lawns from high temperatures and dryness, which would result in reducing labor and the cost of watering. The product would also reduce root rotting, salt damage and heat damage.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: The company was struggling to ascertain what forms and permits would be required and how to contact the permitting agencies.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA staff walked the company through a list of permits required for such businesses. OPA staff also connected the company with permitting specialists at various regulatory agencies.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 2 weeks</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California Department of Food & Agriculture • California Department of Waterboards • California Air Resources Board • California Department of Tax & Fee Administration • California Franchise Tax Board • California Employment Development Department <p>California Department of Industrial Relations</p>
<p>November 2022</p>	<p>Foreign-based Organic Microfiber Fertilizer Company (Sacramento County)</p>

	<p>Background: In November 2022, a corporate officer from a Japanese company contacted OPA for permit and other regulatory assistance for introducing their organic microfiber fertilizer made from coal in California.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: Company did not know who to contact nor which permits they would need.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA Staff connected the company with Secretary of State to register their company, California Tax and Fee Administration to obtain seller’s permit and resale certificate, California Franchise Tax Board to pay taxes for their business entity, Department of Industrial Relations to get information about the labor laws and the California Department of Employment Development to register as an employer.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 1 week</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California Secretary of State • California Department of Tax & Fee Administration • California Franchise Tax Board • California Employment Development Department • California Department of Industrial Relations
<p>January 2023</p>	<p>Foreign-based Recycling Company (Sacramento County)</p> <p>Background: In January 2023, a company contacted OPA regarding permit navigation and regulatory assistance. The company collects oil contaminated containers and safely recycles and repurposes industrial resin.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: The company was unable to find information on permitting requirements to start their business.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA reached out to the Environment Protection Agencies and scheduled a meeting with the company. The company’s permitting needs were addressed and they moved forward with filing their application.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 3 Weeks</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California Department of Waterboards • California Air Resources Board • California Department of Toxic Substances Control • CalRecycle
<p>May 2023</p>	<p>Restaurant Group (Solano County)</p>

	<p>Background: In May 2023 a representative from Office of Economic & Workforce Development of San Francisco reached out to OPA for seeking assistance for an organization that partnered with the French Sovereign Fund to run programming to help French Greentech companies to establish in California.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: Information for contracting with the State of California.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA scheduled a meeting with the company, City of San Francisco official and Business Manager from the Procurement Division of Department of General Services.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 2 weeks</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of General Services (DGS)
<p>June 2023</p>	<p>Vegetable Pickling Business (Santa Barbara County)</p> <p>Background: In June 2023 a small business owner contacted OPA regarding permits required for pickling vegetables and canning them from their home-based business. County health department informed them that they need permits from the state.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: Permits required at the state level and how to contact them.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA scheduled a meeting with the business to get additional information. Contacted the state regulatory agencies to get permitting information and shared it with the business and connected them with the permitting agencies.</p> <p>Resolutions Time: 1 week</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretary of State (SOS) • California Department of Tax & Fee Administration (CDTFA) • Franchise Tax Board (FTB) • California Department of Public Health (CDPH)

Mediation Services

OPA offers neutral mediation services for business entities and regulating government agencies. Case resolution can last anywhere from a few weeks to several months, depending on the complexity of the dispute. Mediation services are not unique to any specific industry or issue type.

During the reporting period, OPA staff received 47 requests that required complex permit mediation services.

Complex permit mediation projects took between one and 60 days to resolve.

OPA helped identify permits and permit processes related to local, state, and federal permitting authorities.

A few case studies of OPA engagement on permit mediation assistance are highlighted below:

<p>October 2022</p>	<p>Renewable Energy Project (Contra Costa County)</p> <p>Background: In October 2022, OPA was contacted by a renewable energy company that would turn landfill gas to renewable natural gas. According to the company, the project would reduce priority pollutant emissions from the landfill that are currently, or will be, flared. This equates to a 75% reduction in nitrogen oxides, 95% reduction in carbon monoxide, and 80% reduction in particulate (PM10) that would directly benefit the air quality in the area. The company also represented that the project would benefit the area by bringing around \$60 million in capital investment and local union jobs.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: The company needed help in getting their permits issued to start digging trenches for laying the pipeline.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA contacted California State Water Resources Control Board & Air Resources Board to learn more about the process and timelines. Regional Waterboards and Air Quality Management District worked with the company to achieve the desired goals for their business.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 15 Days</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) • California Department of Air Resources Board (CARB)
<p>January 2023</p>	<p>Revitalization Project (Sacramento County)</p> <p>Background: In January 2023, OPA was contacted by a foreign company that offered an integrated management system for the recycling of oil contaminated plastic containers. They planned to collect, recycle and reuse contaminated HDPE Plastic.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: The company was facing challenges in getting permit information and approval from the Department of Toxic Substances Control and Department of Resources, Recycling & Recovery. California Air Resources Boards and State Water Resources Control Board.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA reached out to the regulatory agencies and scheduled meetings with the company. OPA requested regulatory agencies to provide guidance to the company.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 15 Days</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) • Department of Resources, Recycling & Recovery (CalRecycle) • California Air Resources Board (CARB)State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)
<p>May 2023</p>	<p>Auto Parts Business (San Diego County)</p> <p>Background: In May 2023, an auto parts company reached out for assistance in getting their apostille approved from the State of California to authenticate their product in Mexico.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: California Secretary of State (SOS) provides an apostille to authenticate California public officials’ signature on documents to be used outside the United States. They needed the apostille approved immediately and could not connect with SOS.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA reached out to the apostille authentication unit within SOS and presented them with the challenge that the company was facing. SOS connected with the company and approved the apostille in a timely manner.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 1 Day</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California Secretary of State (SOS)
<p>May 2023</p>	<p>Military Special Forces Sky Diver Training (San Diego County)</p> <p>Background: In May 2023, a retired disabled veteran reached out to OPA for assistance in getting the necessary permits to open a business bank account with Navy Federal Credit Union, that would enable him to get a contract with the U S military to be a trainer.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: The owner applied to the Secretary of State for registration of their business. They needed the expedite approval to meet the deadline for getting the trainer contract.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA contacted the Secretary of State to inquire about the status of</p>

	<p>his application and explained the reason for his expedited request. SOS worked with him and issued his permit in a timely manner. OPA also reached out to the City of San Diego for local requirements, and they worked with him, and his permits were issued on time.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 7 days</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretary of State • City of San Diego
<p>May 2023</p>	<p>Carbon Removal Technology (San Joaquin County)</p> <p>Background: In May 2023, a Direct Air Capture project construction for permanent carbon removal storage credits to enable governments, organizations, and marketplaces with demonstrable commitment to emissions reductions to achieve their climate goals.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: Company reached out to OPA for assistance in getting their local permits issued to start construction and be successful in opening their facility in a timely manner.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA was able to connect with the city manager and discuss the project and the desired timelines. The city agreed to have a meeting with the company that resulted in mutual agreement to move the project forward.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 2 Weeks</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Manager Tracy • City Attorney Tracy
<p>June 2023</p>	<p>Japanese Restaurant (Los Angeles County)</p> <p>Background: In June 2023, a Japanese restaurant had all its local permits in place, and they were ready to operate. There was a delay in getting their alcoholic beverage control license issued.</p> <p>Permit Challenge: Business could not open without the final inspection by an ABC representative and the issuance of their liquor license.</p> <p>Achieved Results: OPA reached out to the regional ABC office to find out about the delay in final inspection. ABC scheduled the inspection within three days and the business was able to open shortly after that.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 4 days.</p>

	<p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control
<p>June 2023</p>	<p>UK Department of Business and Trade (Los Angeles County)</p> <p>Background: In June 2023, a representative from the UK Department of Business & Trade (DBT) team in Los Angeles reached out to GO-Biz to help accelerate a California Professional Engineering Certification for one of Network Rail Consulting’s (NRC) main engineers on the California High Speed Rail (CHSR) project. Network Rail Consulting is a UK company that has invested in California and maintains operations in San Francisco and Sacramento due the company’s ongoing work with CHSR.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: Engineer submitted his application (with FEE waiver) to the Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and (BPELSG) and the typical application approval time is 30-60 days. However, there was uncertainty surrounding the timing of approval for this application which could impact the delivery of the RSES project.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA reached out to a representative for the Board of Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors and Geologists. They promised to contact the Engineer and work with him to get his application approved in a timely manner.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 3 days</p> <p>Involved Agencies: Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors</p>
<p>July 2023</p>	<p>Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia (San Francisco County)</p> <p>Background: In July 2023, OPA was invited to do a presentation of GO-Biz services to the Indonesian business community.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: Businesses expressed concern about the proposition 65 violations. Indonesian business community is not well versed in English language and had difficulty in understanding the regulation.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA reached out to the attorney at the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEEHA). They are working on simplifying the verbiage and promised to investigate the violations and impositions of the fines. OPA reached out to the Consulate General and scheduled a meeting with OEEHA to address the issue.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 15 days</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEEHA).

<p>September 2023</p>	<p>Video Production Company (Los Angeles County)</p> <p>Background: In September 2023, an award-winning multimedia & post -production company that makes educational films and much more reached out to OPA to request assistance with Franchise Tax Board’s fee waiver policy.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: The company reached out to OPA to request assistance with a \$800 fee waiver for their LLC through the Franchise Tax Board. The fee waiver request was based on the company’s understanding that if they registered with SOS between January 2021 to January 2024, they do not have to pay tax for the 1st year.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA reached out to Franchise Tax Board (FTB) for clarification. They reviewed the options available for such exemptions. They directly reached out to the business owner and addressed their concerns.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 4 days</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California Franchise Tax Board (FTB)
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CONSOLIDATING & DISSEMINATING INFORMATION

California Online Permit Assistance Tool (CalGOLD)

The OPA is responsible for maintaining the California Online Permit Assistance Tool – CalGOLD (www.calgold.ca.gov). CalGOLD is an easy-to-use tool that allows businesses to search for permit requirements tailored to their business type and location in California. Search results are sorted by local, state, and federal requirements, and, for each regulatory agency listed, contact information including physical address, web address, and telephone number is provided.

CalGOLD also includes a Forms and Fees Finder, developed and maintained by the relevant department, to help businesses find application forms and associated fees.

Website traffic for CalGOLD during the reporting period:

- Page Views: 203,283
- Unique Page Views: 158,851

Please see the top 10 cities that CalGOLD site visitors are located:

California City	Users
Los Angeles	12,339
San Jose	3,761
San Diego	2,945
Sacramento	2,112
San Francisco	2,064
Ontario	1,624

Fresno	741
Oakland	681
Irvine	586
Long Beach	558

CalGOLD 2.0 New Application & Data Migration Activities

Currently the OPA and the GO-Biz IT Unit have been working on the development of CalGOLD 2.0 to transfer existing data into a new system that will allow GO-Biz staff to better manage the database, make timely updates and additions, allow for external partners to update relevant content, and provide a platform for further agency collaboration to improve the overall permitting process in California. The main goal for the CalGOLD 2.0 platform is to allow permitting agencies to update their permits content in real-time. This would shift the responsibilities for maintaining data in the tool to local and state permitting authorities.

CalGOLD 2.0 will provide updated content through a refreshed user interface for a more streamlined user and staff maintenance experience.

CalGOLD 2.0 implements new technology, design, and information to improve the overall user experience and quality of permit assistance information. The following steps have been achieved in the current reporting period:

- Implemented the current State of California web template.
- Implemented responsive design to allow for CalGOLD 2.0 to be used on desktop computers, laptops, tablets, phones, and other devices.
- Redesigned CalGOLD 2.0 to be hosted in GO-Biz cloud. Cal GOLD v1 was previously hosted in a physical server environment. Cal GOLD v1 has been moved to California Department of Technology Azure cloud environment.
- Redesigned the new application to improve ability to create and update all permit related information, permit authorities, contacts, and cities.
- Performed initial data migration and clean up from Cal GOLD v1 to Cal GOLD v2.
- With the data migration process complete, a final review and approval from the OPA remains before the application can be officially launched.
- Functionality for permitting authority users to create, read, and update permit and license related information is waiting for user acceptance testing. Once user acceptance testing is complete, this functionality will be released.

A current version of the CalGOLD 2.0 production environment can be viewed and accessed through the following link: <https://prod.calgold.ca.gov/>

GO-Biz staff sees the build-out of CalGOLD 2.0 as an opportunity for future collaboration with permitting officials to provide more customer service focused engagements with applicants in the overall permitting process.

Quick Start Guides

Quick Start Guides for common industry types are available for business owners to serve as reference tools for new business launches. These guides are available on the California Business Portal at <https://calosba.ca.gov/permits-licenses-regulation/professional-licensure-guide/>

The Quick Start Guides are intended to be used as a singular guide for commonly asked questions related to specific industries.

For this reporting period, the GO-Biz Business Portal Quick Start Guide webpage received over 9,600 unique visits from users. The site maintains Quick Start Guides on the following industries:

- Automotive Repair
- Barber Shops and Beauty Salons
- Building or Engineering Contractor
- Business Consultants
- Cannabis Operations
- Catering Businesses
- Cottage Food Operation
- Domestic Repair (Handyman)
- Fitness Centers
- Mobile Food Vendors
- Pet or House Sitting
- Photographer
- Physical Therapist
- Restaurants, Bakeries, and Bars
- Retail Stores
- Software/Mobile App Developer
- Tutoring
- Recycling and Recovery
- Aquaculture
- Alcoholic Beverage Licenses

For this reporting period, the OPA updated links to the following Quick Start Guides:

- Mobile Food Truck
- Freight & Trucking Industry
- Quick Start Guide for Alcoholic Beverage Licenses
- Business Consultants

MAJOR REGULATIONS - STANDARDIZED REGULATORY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (SRIA)

The OPA team reviewed and commented on a total of 4 SRIAs from State departments in the current reporting period.

The following is a list of the SRIAs reviewed:

1. **September 2022:** CalSavers Retirement Savings Bond: Regulations for the Amendment to the CalSavers Retirement Savings Program
2. **December 2022:** State Water Resources Control Board: Hexavalent Chromium Maximum Containment Level

3. **March 2023:** State Water Resources Control Board: Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life
4. **April 2023:** California Air Resources Board: Regulations for Zero-Emission Forklifts