



**County of Albemarle**  
**Community Development Department - Planning Division**

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To: Albemarle Conservation Easement Authority  
From: James Van Vranken, Natural Resources Planner  
Re: ACEA Approval Request Delegation Policy  
Date: September 3, 2025

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**Background:** Many conservation easements held by the ACEA, including all easements drafted using the current template, specify certain activities to be permitted after receiving approval from the holder. Examples of these activities include timbering, the construction of utility lines serving other properties, unspecified commercial uses, external boundary line adjustments, the construction of a building exceeding the specified size limit, and more.

**Discussion:** Many approval requests require a simple verification that the proposed activity does not interfere with the stated conservation values of the property. It is common practice for conservation easement holders, in such cases, to delegate approvals to staff. This saves time at Authority meetings for issues that require deliberation and decreases response times for landowners and third parties seeking holder approval. A smoother approval process also increases the likelihood that landowners and third parties will continue to seek approval when required, instead of acting without approval to save time and money.

Below is a table of common approval requests, which forms part of the attached draft policy (Attachment A).

	Does it impact protected areas?	
	Yes	No
Pre-harvest plans	ACEA	Staff
Utility easements and infrastructure that serve only the property under easement	ACEA	Staff
Utility easements and infrastructure that serve other properties	ACEA	Staff
Requests to exceed building size limits by less than 25% of the limit (in cases where allowed by the deed)	ACEA	Staff
Requests to exceed building size limits by more than 25% of the limit (in cases where allowed by the deed)	ACEA	ACEA

The draft policy, which staff would like Directors to react to and amend as appropriate, contains delegation to staff for four categories of approval request and only in cases where the proposed activity does not interfere with protected areas specified by the deed (forest protection areas, riparian buffers, etc.).

Recommendation: Staff recommends the Authority adopt the Approval Request Delegation policy.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Draft Approval Request Delegation Policy

Albemarle Conservation Easement Authority: Approval Request Delegation

The following table specifies when approval can only be issued by the full authority, and when the ACEA staff liaison may act on the Authority’s behalf.

	Does it impact protected areas*?	
	Yes	No
Pre-harvest plans	ACEA	Staff
Utility easements and infrastructure that serve only the property under easement	ACEA	Staff
Utility easements and infrastructure that serve other properties	ACEA	Staff
Requests to exceed building size limits by less than 25% of the limit (in cases where allowed by the deed)	ACEA	Staff
Requests to exceed building size limits by more than 25% of the limit (in cases where allowed by the deed)	ACEA	ACEA

\* “Protected areas” means specific resources affected by restrictions in the deed, such as stream buffers, forest protection areas, etc.

Any approval request not included in the table must be reviewed by the Authority. Staff may present any approval request to the Authority for action, even if that request falls in a category normally reviewed by staff.

*Adopted XXXX*