Chile Sets a Regional Benchmark for Streamlined Permitting and Infrastructure Investment

With its Framework Law on Sectoral Authorizations, Chile is simplifying more than 380 permits through a single, coordinated system – reducing bureaucracy, enhancing legal certainty, and accelerating project execution. Beyond its domestic impact, this bold reform positions Chile as a regional leader in regulatory modernization, offering a transparent, predictable, and investment-friendly model for infrastructure and energy development across Latin America.

I. A Comprehensive Framework for Regulatory Modernization

Law No. 21,770, published on September 29, 2025 (the "**Law**" or "**LMAS**"), marks a major milestone in Chile's regulatory modernization. The Law establishes a common, binding framework for more than 380 sectoral permits, with the aim of reducing administrative processing time by 30–70%, strengthening legal certainty, and improving coordination between the State, investors, and technical agencies.

It seeks to make the permitting system more standardized, transparent, and efficient, reinforcing the principles of legality, inter-agency coordination, and proportionality in administrative action. Operationally, the LMAS introduces a uniform procedural structure, setting out the following key innovations:

1. **Minimum Processing Standards:** These standards include the use of digital applications through standardized forms, coordinated inter-agency reviews, mandatory decision deadlines, and the systematic use of administrative silence (positive or negative) depending on the permit type. This procedural clarity is intended to streamline permitting and provide legal certainty for actors.

2. **Alternative Enabling Techniques or THA** ("*Técnicas Habilitantes Alternativas"* – "THA"): These instruments, such as prior notices or sworn statements, allow low-risk projects to begin without awaiting a prior administrative act. These mechanisms take immediate legal effect and remain subject to subsequent oversight by the competent authority. In addition, in order to prevent abuse of these simplified mechanisms, the law expressly typifies economic crimes to sanction the fraudulent use. However, their application is not yet generalized: THA are only applicable to those administrative procedures expressly amended by the LMAS in its Final Title, which entails a gradual and sector-specific implementation.

3. **Digital Single Window called *"Sistema de Información Unificado de Permisos Sectoriales"*** ("**SUPER**"): a single electronic platform for submitting and tracking all sectoral permits online. Through SUPER, traceability and transparency are ensured at every stage of the procedure by integrating information from different State agencies into a single, interoperable system. This technological infrastructure is expected to facilitate inter-institutional coordination, improve administrative efficiency, and reduce administrative bottlenecks.

4. **New Institutional Framework**: the LMAS creates the *Oficina de Autorizaciones Sectoriales e Inversión* ("**OASI**"), under the Ministry of Economy. OASI will be responsible for coordinating the system and managing SUPER platform.

II. Regulatory Impact and Implementation Challenges of the LMAS

The LMAS has a strategic impact across key sectors such as energy, mining, transport, construction, and sanitation, where projects often require multiple authorizations from different agencies. By introducing uniform rules, digitalizing procedures, and enabling parallel processing, the Law reduces the operational complexity that has historically slowed investment an projects execution.

Its transformative potential, however, will depend on effective implementation. The issuance of complementary regulations within a tight timeframe, the adaptation of sectoral frameworks, and the full deployment of the SUPER platform will be essential to ensure consistency, legal certainty and administrative coherence. Both public agencies and private actors will need to adapt to a new regulatory culture based on digital traceability, accountability, and ex post oversight. Far from being a constraint, this shift provides a unique opportunity to strength institutional trust, enhance investment confidence, and consolidate a more agile and transparent regulatory environment.

III. Regional Outlook: A Comparative Reference

In the context of Chile's LMAS, it is relevant to consider how other Latin American jurisdictions are addressing similar regulatory challenges. Across the region, governments are seeking to modernize their permitting systems to promote infrastructure development and attract investment, though through diverse institutional and procedural approaches. While Chile has opted for a unified and cross-sectoral framework that standardizes principles and timelines across public agencies, other countries have advanced through more sector-specific or incremental reforms, often focused on environmental licensing or digital integration.

This regional overview examines key legislative developments in Brazil, Colombia, and Peru, which illustrate different models of regulatory streamlining currently being tested in Latin America. These examples provide useful points of comparison for understanding the distinctive scope and ambition of Chile's LMAS.

Brazil, for instance, has adopted a sectoral and targeted approach to expedite infrastructure development. Law No. 15,190/2025, which establishes a national framework for environmental licensing, introduced a special procedure for strategic projects aimed at accelerating the assessment of works under the *Novo PAC* investment program. These projects are selected by the Chamber of Strategic Activities and Enterprises, an inter-ministerial body created under Decree No. 12,673/2025, which identifies initiatives of national interest and coordinates their priority processing.

Such projects are granted a Special Environmental License that provides for shorter deadlines, dedicated technical teams, and integrated authorization management, without exempting them from compliance with substantive environmental standards. This mechanism seeks to reduce processing times for major public works and enhance coordination among federal and state environmental agencies within the National Environmental System (SISNAMA). It represents a significant step toward regulatory standardization and intergovernmental cooperation, laying the groundwork for a more agile and predictable environmental management regime. Looking ahead, its consolidation could evolve toward a more integrated permitting and management model -similar to the cross-sectoral approach underpinning Chile's LMAS- gradually expanding its reach to other sectors and strengthening institutional interoperability across levels of government. In this sense, the Brazilian model is emerging as a federal coordination laboratory that could pave the way for broader regulatory modernization in the region.

Colombia, by contrast, has built its environmental licensing system on Law No. 99 of 1993 (Title VIII) and Decree 1076 of 2015 (DURSA). Under this regime, the environmental license functions as a comprehensive administrative act that consolidates, within the environmental sphere, all necessary project authorizations -such as water concessions, discharge permits, and emissions authorizations- which are deemed implicitly granted under Decree 2041/2014. Large-scale projects are assessed by the National Environmental Licensing Authority (ANLA), and applications are processed through the VITAL digital platform (Decree Law 2106/2019). However, this integration remains strictly environmental: non-environmental sectoral permits -such as urban planning, sanitary, or mining titles- remain under the jurisdiction of their respective agencies. Colombia currently lacks a comprehensive framework law that articulates all sectoral authorizations under unified procedural principles, which limits the level of integration achieved compared to Chile's LMAS.

Finally, in Chile's neighboring country, Peru, the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MINEM) has implemented the Digital One-Stop Window for the Mining Sector (VUD-MINEM), established under Supreme Decree No. 017-2023-EM, with the objective of digitalizing and centralizing administrative procedures related to mining activities. This platform seeks to integrate 62 procedures from nine public entities, including the National Service for Environmental Certification of Sustainable Investments (SENACE), which plays a key role in environmental project assessments.

Despite these important sectoral advances, Peru has not yet adopted a comprehensive legal framework mandating all public entities to standardize deadlines, criteria, and coordination mechanisms. Strengthening such a framework would represent a critical opportunity to enhance regulatory coherence, moving toward a more integrated, predictable, and institutionally coordinated administrative system. This would reduce current fragmentation and dependence on political will, strengthening the country's ability to attract and sustain long-term investment.

IV. Conclusion

Taken together, the experiences of Brazil, Colombia, and Peru reflect a sustained regional effort to modernize and streamline permitting processes, seeking greater predictability and coordination among public authorities. Each country has pursued sectoral or incremental strategies -from Brazil's special environmental license to Colombia's and Peru's digital one-stop windows- that represent meaningful streps toward more efficient public administration. However, these advances remain partial and fragmented, largely dependent on political will and the institutional capacity of each sector.

In this context, Chile stands out as a regional pioneer and reference point with the enactment of the LMAS, which introduces a genuinely cross-cutting approach by establishing common principles, timelines, and coordination mechanisms applicable across the entire public administration. The LMAS marks a new model of regulatory governance, unifying digital platforms, enabling mechanisms, and inter-agency coordination into a permanent system. It positions Chile as a regional benchmark for a more efficient, transparent, predictable, and balanced permitting regime that aligns investment promotion with public interest protection.

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