



July 21, 2025

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Oversight hearing titled *"Permitting Purgatory: Restoring Common Sense to NEPA Reviews."*

Dear Chairman Westerman:

We write to you today, as a coalition of oil and natural gas trade associations representing over 80% of domestic production in the United States, urging you to take swift action on permitting reform in Congress. The success of the American economy relies on the ability of our association's members to prudently access and develop the abundant energy resources of our nation.

Reforming the nation's outdated permitting system is critical to bolstering energy security, growing jobs, and building much-needed energy infrastructure to support the projected energy demands of our country in the coming years. According to Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, as of 2022 it took an average of five years for an energy infrastructure project to move from initial permitting to operation, more than double the time it took in 2000. Compounding these delays, Stanford University reports that nearly 30% of major energy and infrastructure projects requiring an environmental impact statement face predevelopment litigation, often based on meritless or duplicative claims under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). These lawsuits have become a tool to delay or price projects out of existence. Delays discourage investment and threaten our energy security. Many projects take even longer or are ultimately cancelled as funding is lost, or companies decide to invest in regions with more stable and predictable permitting regimes.

As your committee begins the heavy lift of holding oversight hearings and developing legislation, we recommend the principles that form the foundation of strong energy development be prioritized. Permitting reform should:

- Define clear agency permitting approval processes
- Streamline interagency coordination of reviews
- Ensure cost certainties and reliable timetables
- Place reasonable limits on environmental reviews
- Prohibit project approvals from being slowed for political purposes
- Prevent obstructionist protests intended to indefinitely halt projects
- Set clear guidelines for judicial reviews and corrective actions.

To those ends, we are grateful to President Trump for rightly setting our nation on the path of increasing domestic oil and natural gas production. We were pleased that on day one President Trump signed the Unleashing American Energy and Declaring a National Energy Emergency Executive Orders. His immediate call to reverse the damage of onerous regulations is immensely welcomed. In addition, the recent changes by the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and multiple federal agencies to streamline project permitting under NEPA by specifying limitations and deadlines for environmental reviews are beneficial.

We applaud the recent *Seven County* decision by the Supreme Court of the United States that unanimously condemned the paralysis caused by endless permitting reviews and environmental analysis. The court provided much-needed clarification on the bounds of NEPA reviews and the scope of federal agency processes. As Justice Brett Kavanaugh wrote, "Simply stated, NEPA - The National Environmental Policy Act - is a procedural cross-check, not a substantive roadblock. The goal of the law is to inform agency decision making, not to paralyze it."

In Congress, we similarly support recent changes to permitting and environmental reviews. Last Congress, the Fiscal Responsibility Act showed bipartisan recognition that change is needed if our nation is going to build modern energy infrastructure and that support across the aisle is achievable. The law was a good first step to advancing reasonable limits on the scope of project analysis and approval timelines. Most recently, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act further advances key priorities that support permitting of oil and natural gas and limit project delays.

Throughout debate in Congress, the White House during two administrations, the Supreme Court, and in the public, one thing is abundantly clear: comprehensive permitting reform is still needed, and it starts with Congress. The good news is tremendous work has already been done to provide the foundation for lawmakers to complete and pass durable, bipartisan legislation. In tandem, the Lower Energy Costs Act (H.R. 1) and the Energy Permitting Reform Act (S. 4753) should serve as underlying proposals to guide permitting reform this session. Both bills would advance the priorities listed above.

The members of this coalition stand ready, willing, and capable of meeting the call for increasing domestic oil and natural gas production. We welcome the opportunity to work with your committee and others as we advance the common goal of American energy dominance.

Sincerely,

Energy Workforce & Technology Council
International Association of Drilling Contractors
Independent Petroleum Association of America
Gulf Energy Alliance
National Ocean Industries Association
Texas Alliance of Energy Producers
U.S. Oil & Gas Association
Western Energy Alliance