

September 4, 2025

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson, Minority Leader Jeffries, Majority Leader Thune, and Minority Leader Schumer,

America's economic competitiveness depends on our ability to build critical infrastructure quickly. With electricity demand surging from AI, manufacturing, and industrial growth, we need unprecedented levels of new energy production, transmission, and pipeline infrastructure—and we need it now.

Unfortunately, today's permitting system was designed for a different era. While laws like the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) were written with good intentions, they have evolved into procedural gauntlets. In the 1970s, the NEPA process for highway projects took a mean of [2.2 years](#) to complete. The average time to complete an Environmental Impact Statement and obtain a Record of Decision now takes an average of almost 4 years. The full process is often further slowed because energy projects of all types run into a [“litigation doom loop”](#), years of lawsuits and delay that create uncertainty and chill investment. These delays don't improve environmental outcomes, but they do prevent America from building the infrastructure we need.

Similarly, the Clean Water Act has created lengthy approval processes that can cause regulatory uncertainty for everything from hydropower to semiconductor fabs to pipelines. In particular, Congress should examine and consider modifications to the State Water Quality Certification process to ensure that reviews and requirements are focused on the direct water quality impacts the law was intended to address.

We applaud the bipartisan momentum this Congress has built toward comprehensive permitting reform, including Representative Westerman and Representative Golden's leadership on the SPEED Act. The SPEED Act incorporates permitting reform principles that deserve bipartisan support, including:

- **Focusing environmental reviews on direct, significant impacts** rather than speculative or tangentially related effects
- **Establishing reasonable timelines** for agency decision-making while maintaining thorough environmental analysis
- **Streamlining judicial review** to ensure certainty and prevent weaponization of the courts against important infrastructure projects
- **Improving efficiency** through greater use of programmatic environmental reviews and categorical exclusions

Comprehensive permitting reform should also modernize transmission planning and approval processes necessary to build the grid America needs. These reforms should provide an efficient and predictable process for developers proposing projects that improve grid reliability and benefit customers – complemented by robust interregional planning. All such reforms should protect customers by ensuring that costs of new infrastructure are only borne by those who benefit, in accordance with the long-standing cost-causation principle.

Lawmakers must finish the job of reforming permitting this Congress. Faster permitting will mean lower project costs, reduced electricity prices, and more competitive manufacturing. It will mean American technology companies can build the data centers needed to lead in artificial intelligence, and it will mean that energy developers can deliver reliable, affordable power when and where it's needed.

We look forward to working with you on these critical issues.

Respectfully,

