



July 31, 2025

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
202 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jared Huffman
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
2330 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Support for H.R. 4776 – Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act

Dear Chairman Westerman, Ranking Member Huffman, and Members of the House Natural Resources Committee:

On behalf of ALEC *Action*, I am writing to encourage support for H.R. 4776, the Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act, a critical measure to reform and modernize the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Though it may have been well-intentioned for its time, the current NEPA framework has become a tool for obstruction, often resulting in costly delays, regulatory uncertainty, and diminished competitiveness across America's energy, infrastructure, and industrial sectors.

NEPA's original purpose was to ensure that federal agencies consider a project's environmental impacts during the decision-making process. It was not intended to enable extensive legal obstacles that delay virtually all development that uses federal funds or requires a permit. Today, NEPA litigation has become a hallmark of delay tactics across major sectors.

On average, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) takes four and a half years to complete, with 25 percent taking longer than six years.¹ In some cases, project approvals have been delayed for more than a decade.² These delays create uncertainty for developers, drive up project costs, and threaten overall feasibility. The resulting economic consequences are considerable, causing the cost of infrastructure projects to increase by as much as 20 percent due to regulatory hold-ups.³

The SPEED Act reaffirms NEPA's procedural nature by clarifying that it would not mandate specific outcomes and serve only to inform, not determine, policy decisions. If enacted, H.R. 4776 would directly address long-standing inefficiencies in the environmental review process by establishing firm deadlines and ending the unnecessary extension or reopening

¹ White House Council on Environmental Quality. "Length of Environmental Impact Statements 2013–2017." 22 July 2019. https://ceq.doe.gov/docs/nepa-practice/CEQ_EIS_Length_Report_2019-7-22.pdf

² "Getting Closer to Shovel Ready." The Wall Street Journal. 13 January 2020. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/getting-closer-to-shovel-ready-11578958143>

³ Congressional Western Caucus "BRANDED: To modernize infrastructure, start with NEPA reform" 22 March 2022. <https://westerncaucus.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=3914>



of reviews through ongoing scientific challenges. When assessing environmental risks, agencies could only consider impacts with a “reasonably close causal relationship to, and are proximately caused by,” a project. Finally, this proposal would limit judicial overreach by confining courts to procedural review, protecting lawful infrastructure development from meritless litigation.

These reforms align closely with ALEC’s principles for sound environmental and infrastructure governance, which prioritize regulatory certainty, deference to states, and the reduction of unnecessary legal bottlenecks. As ALEC’s Model Resolution Concerning Oil and Gas Production on Federal Lands outlines, permitting reform is essential to unlocking investment and reducing delays that harm both workers and taxpayers.⁴

From energy production to housing to broadband expansion, infrastructure projects across the country are mired in review processes that bear little relation to actual environmental outcomes. This legislation would restore balance and ensure that NEPA fulfills its original purpose to inform, not obstruct development. Therefore, we respectfully urge the Committee to support prompt approval of the SPEED Act and advance policies that streamline the permitting process, promote infrastructure resilience, and unlock economic opportunity for all Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa B. Nelson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lisa" being the most prominent.

Lisa B. Nelson
CEO
ALEC Action

⁴ ALEC Model Policy: “Resolution Concerning Oil and Gas Production on Federal Lands.” ALEC.org. July 2014.
<https://alec.org/model-policy/resolution-concerning-oil-gas-production-federal-lands/>