



September 10, 2025

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jared Golden
U.S. House of Representatives
1222 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Support for the Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act

Dear Chairman Westerman and Representative Golden:

On behalf of the Family Farm Alliance, representing farmers, ranchers, water managers, and irrigation districts across 16 Western states, I write to express our strong support for the bipartisan SPEED Act. For decades, our members have seen firsthand how the outdated and increasingly cumbersome National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process has delayed or derailed projects vital to Western water supply, agricultural productivity, forest health, and rural economic resilience.

While NEPA was established with worthy intentions in 1970, it has evolved into a half-century-old regulatory system that too often prioritizes paperwork and litigation over meaningful environmental stewardship. In recent years, reviews for even routine maintenance on irrigation ditches or modest rehabilitation of existing dams have taken years and consumed scarce resources, without delivering measurable ecosystem benefits. This broken process not only undermines food and water security but also jeopardizes the economic viability of rural communities and the future of Western irrigated agriculture.

The SPEED Act would modernize NEPA to return it to its intended role as a procedural statute—one that ensures agencies take a “hard look” at environmental impacts, without weaponizing the

law to block critical projects indefinitely. Specifically, we support provisions in the SPEED Act that:

- Establish clear deadlines and page limits for environmental assessments and impact statements, creating certainty for both agencies and applicants.
- Narrow the definition of “major Federal action” to prevent unnecessary and duplicative reviews.
- Expand categorical exclusions and allow agencies to rely on prior federal, state, and tribal environmental reviews, reducing redundancy and cost.
- Clarify judicial review, including a 150-day deadline for filing claims, which will reduce frivolous litigation and provide stakeholders with predictable resolution.
- Codify the Supreme Court’s recognition that NEPA is a procedural law, ensuring courts give appropriate deference to reasonable agency determinations

For farmers and ranchers, the stakes could not be higher. Without timely investments in water supply and conveyance projects, the future of irrigated agriculture is at risk. Critical forest health projects are also slowed by endless process, leaving millions of acres vulnerable to catastrophic wildfires that threaten downstream water supplies and rural livelihoods

Modernizing NEPA through the SPEED Act will empower local managers to implement solutions quickly, strengthen our nation’s food and water security, and demonstrate that environmental stewardship and economic progress can go hand-in-hand.

We urge Congress to advance this legislation without delay. The SPEED Act provides much-needed reforms to streamline the NEPA process and reduce unnecessary litigation that has delayed critical Western water supply and infrastructure projects for years. This legislation will help farmers, ranchers, and rural communities to move forward with projects that enhance their ability to remain productive and competitive. We strongly support this common-sense approach to advancing water supply enhancement and other essential projects.

Thank you for your leadership and for the opportunity to express our support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DK', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Dan Keppen
Executive Director
Family Farm Alliance