
July 30, 2025

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

The Honorable Jared Golden
House Committee on Natural Resources
1107 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Westerman and Congressman Golden,

On behalf of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), thank you for your bipartisan effort to improve the federal environmental review process. I write in support of H.R. 4776, the Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act.

NRECA is the national trade association representing nearly 900 not-for-profit electric cooperatives owned by the people that they serve. Electric cooperatives serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) has become increasingly complex, unpredictable, and unworkable over time. The SPEED Act includes much-needed reforms to modernize environmental permitting and support electric co-ops' energy development.

Electric co-ops need to build significant new electric transmission and generation capacity to keep pace with rising demand and maintain reliability. As co-ops plan for the future, they must navigate a patchwork of federal, state, and local permitting requirements. Prolonged environmental reviews and legal challenges not only delay these new projects, but also hinder vegetation management and routine maintenance for existing systems. These hurdles can significantly increase costs, which must eventually be shouldered by the member consumer at the end of the line.

The SPEED Act offers meaningful solutions. It establishes clear limitations on judicial review for NEPA-related claims that too often stall critical projects indefinitely. The bill also addresses uncertainty by clarifying when a NEPA review is triggered and narrowing the scope of required reviews. These reforms would ensure agencies concentrate on direct, foreseeable environmental impacts within their expertise and legal mandate.

By streamlining the federal permitting process, the SPEED Act will help reduce delays and provide the regulatory certainty needed to ensure reliable electricity for communities nationwide. We thank Chairman Westerman and Congressman Golden for addressing the challenges facing grid reliability and urge Congress to pass this bill.

Sincerely,



Jim Matheson
CEO, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association