

To: The Honorable Bruce Westerman
United States House of Representatives
202 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

From: Oceantic Network

July 30, 2025

Subject: Oceantic Network Comment on the Introduction of the Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act

Dear Representative Westerman,

On behalf of the Oceantic Network, we are writing to expressing our gratitude for introducing the Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act. We commend your leadership in introducing this critical legislation aimed at modernizing and streamlining the federal environmental review and permitting process. The Oceantic Network represents the offshore wind supply chain, an industry which has made \$25 billion of investment across 40 states.

America's growing demand for reliable power, particularly for critical needs on the East Coast like supporting major data centers, underscores the urgent need to bring new energy generation online in a timely manner. The offshore wind industry stands ready to deliver, with six projects currently under construction representing 6 GW of badly needed energy capacity and another 13 GW having secured a Record of Decision from the Department of Interior after years of rigorous environmental review at times lasting nearly a decade. Long-term demand from the states equals at least five times this permitted activity, showcasing the need for permitting regularity and predictability to ensure states can properly plan their energy portfolios.

We share your commitment to improving the efficiency of federal permitting, a sentiment you have rightly emphasized in the drafting of this bill. The offshore wind industry has already demonstrated its capacity for job creation across the country, fostering a robust domestic supply chain, and attracting significant investments. Just this summer, several specialized vessels are being launched to serve the industry, including a new Service Operation Vessel in Sturgeon Bay, WI, and a Wind Turbine Installation Vessel in Brownsville, TX, injecting more than \$1 billion into U.S. shipyards. However, industry progress (and investment) has stalled, and some projects have even seen permits revoked due to ideological reasons.

The provisions within the SPEED Act hold significant potential to address the current challenges in permitting for offshore wind energy projects and associated infrastructure. By clarifying NEPA's procedural intent, narrowing the scope of environmental reviews to focus on direct and proximate impacts, and establishing clear timelines for agency decisions, this bill can bring market certainty needed to attract investments and maximize job creation while bringing projects online in a predictable manner.

A more efficient and predictable permitting framework will directly translate into lower project costs. These cost reductions are crucial, as they ultimately lead to lower electricity prices for consumers and foster greater investment in the burgeoning offshore wind industry. This, in turn, will drive significant job creation across the United States, supporting a robust domestic supply chain, a heavy manufacturing sector, and a skilled workforce.

While the SPEED Act offers promising improvements to the NEPA process, we must also highlight an existential concern the offshore wind industry faces. The current environment, marked by a temporary yet indefinite pause on offshore wind permitting and new directives requiring heightened review of every permit or action related to offshore wind decisions, creates significant uncertainty. Permitting reform should aim to ensure continuity and remove political interference from energy development decisions, rather than inadvertently picking “winners and losers” among energy sectors with jobs and industrial growth at stake. Without provisions which ensure permit processes and approvals follow a standard course of action, even the most efficient NEPA process cannot ensure America has enough power to grow its burgeoning data centers. The significant jobs, investments, and supply chain development that offshore wind promises for the United States will remain unrealized if these high-level permitting pauses continue to impede progress.

We believe the SPEED Act represents a crucial step towards unlocking the full potential of offshore wind as a clean energy source, contributing to energy independence, economic growth, and environmental sustainability. However, for the industry to truly thrive and deliver on its promise, it is imperative that the underlying issues causing the current permit hold-ups are also addressed, ensuring that permitting reforms are tech-neutral and bring greater certainty to all energy communities.

Thank you for your commitment to improving our nation's infrastructure and energy future. We look forward to working with you as this important legislation advances.

Sincerely,

Sam Salustro

Senior Vice President of Strategic Communication

Oceantic Network