



November 18, 2025

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jared Huffman
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Westerman and Ranking Member Huffman:

On behalf of the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC), the business voice of the nation's engineering industry, I am writing in support of ongoing legislative efforts in the House Natural Resources Committee to advance bipartisan permitting reform legislation. ACEC broadly supports many of the reforms to the *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)* in H.R. 4776, the *SPEED Act*, and encourages its swift consideration in the House of Representatives.

ACEC has long supported efficient and responsible environmental review policies that support infrastructure project delivery while ensuring environmental and safety protections and public engagement. Bipartisan permitting legislation in Congress has the potential to build on the process improvements enacted in the *Fiscal Responsibility Act* and other executive actions to facilitate more timely and efficient environmental reviews that will allow the United States to continue to address the backlog of infrastructure projects.

The *SPEED Act* makes significant reforms to address ongoing concerns with how federal agencies implement NEPA's environmental review process. Importantly, the legislation will reduce duplicative environmental reviews, ensure that the range of alternatives meets the purpose and need of the project's applicant, and define which activities will be considered "major federal actions." The legislation will also make reforms to judicial review for NEPA-related cases to ensure that projects are not held up by endless litigation.

ACEC is also pleased to see that the Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute includes language directing the lead agency to identify and convene each cooperating agency at the beginning of the NEPA process to coordinate on developing a schedule for the proposed agency action. This will help to improve collaboration and accountability between agencies to expedite the permitting process.

One aspect of the legislation for which ACEC seeks additional clarification is a provision of the bill that would exempt federal grant awards as an agency action that would trigger a NEPA review. We agree that there are many instances where simply awarding a grant should not trigger a NEPA review, however, ACEC members seek to ensure that the scope of this provision does

not result in exempting from NEPA grant-awarded projects that could have significant environmental impacts or unintentionally creating coordination challenges by removing the funding agency as the lead agency for the purposes of NEPA.

ACEC members know first-hand how challenging and inefficient the current environmental review process can be, preventing good projects from being built and causing many others to languish for years. Permitting reform is essential to modernizing our nation's infrastructure and supporting economic development and American competitiveness. That is why ACEC continues to support bipartisan efforts to make commonsense reforms that will improve the permitting process while also maintaining environmental protections and opportunities for public input.

ACEC and our members stand ready to continue to work with you and your committee as you advance the *SPEED Act* and other permitting reform legislation. Thank you for your continued focus on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Linda Bauer Darr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Linda" being the most prominent.

Linda Bauer Darr
President & CEO

cc: The Honorable Jared Golden