



July 30, 2025

House Committee on Natural Resources

1324 Longworth House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Westerman and Members of the House Committee on Natural Resources,

Center of the American Experiment is writing to support the policies enumerated in the Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act. American Experiment is a nonprofit civic and education public policy organization based in Minnesota.

Minnesota is a prime example of the costs of an inefficient permitting system. Minnesota is home to one of the world's largest undeveloped copper, nickel, and cobalt deposits in the Duluth Complex. Minnesota already ranks fourth nationwide in terms of the value of its mineral production, generating \$6.82 billion in 2023, and does so under some of the nation's most comprehensive environmental protection programs.

Unfortunately, NEPA-related delays and uncertainty at the federal level have stymied responsible resource development in Minnesota. The NorthMet project began permitting in 2004 with expectations of starting construction by 2015. Yet more than two decades later, progress remains stalled, with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers revoking a previously issued Clean Water Act Sec. 404 permit. Similarly, in 2022, the Twin Metals project saw its federal leases canceled by the Biden administration, with a 20-year mining moratorium on 225,000 acres in the Rainy River watershed.

The permitting whiplash between administrations leaves local communities in limbo, depriving them of high-paying mining jobs and tax revenue. NewRange Copper-Nickel [estimates](#) that NorthMet would create 360 permanent jobs, 700 construction jobs, and \$30 million in annual state and local tax revenue. Communities should not be hostage to an unpredictable and politicized process.

American Experiment's [October 2024 report](#) documented how NEPA has been transformed from a *procedural* safeguard into a substantive barrier. Until recently, NEPA required agencies to exhaustively evaluate speculative and cumulative impacts far beyond their legal mandate and select alternatives that achieve an environmentally preferable

outcome—sometimes in direct conflict with the agency’s purpose and its statutory obligations.

While recent actions—such as Executive Order 14154, the Supreme Court’s ruling in [*Seven County Infrastructure Coalition v. Eagle County, Colorado*](#), and the One Big Beautiful Bill Act—have moved toward restoring balance, permanent legislative reform is essential.

Developers of mines, oil and gas projects, and more all need certainty. The [SPEED Act](#) accomplishes this by:

1. Clarifying that NEPA is a “purely procedural statute” that “does not mandate particular results,” in accordance with the Court’s decision in *Seven County*;
2. Clarifying the scope of a “major federal action” and “reasonably foreseeable” impacts so that NEPA obligations is restricted to each agency’s regulatory authority and expertise within the project area;
3. Prohibiting agencies from rescinding or invalidating completed NEPA documents except by court order;
4. Establishing judicial review limitations for NEPA-based legal challenges, including a 150-day statute of limitations to file claims from the date of the final agency action on a project;
5. Require courts to resolve NEPA cases within 180 days and keep agency actions in effect during remand.

These provisions will provide certainty for all sectors. Congress can end decades of delay and restore predictability to the permitting process, strengthening supply chains, reducing reliance on foreign adversaries, and creating prosperity for Minnesota.

Center of the American Experiment applauds the SPEED Act and the efforts of Chairman Westerman, Rep. Golden, and the members of the House Natural Resources committee to make the NEPA process work better for all Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Sarah Montalbano". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sarah" and last name "Montalbano" clearly distinguishable.

Sarah Montalbano

Energy and Environmental Policy Fellow

Center of the American Experiment