

**BRENT J. RIDGE**  
President and CEO



November 19, 2025

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

The Honorable Jared Huffman, Ranking Member  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
1332 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Westerman and Ranking Member Huffman:

On behalf of Dairyland Power Cooperative (Dairyland), I write in strong support of H.R. 4776, the "Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act." This legislation is essential to reliably and affordably meet the growing nationwide energy needs of consumers and industry, with fewer bureaucratic hurdles and legal delays. We support common sense, practical reforms to the current six-year statute of limitations that allow the procedural requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to impose real-world costs and delays through the judicial system.

Dairyland is a Generation & Transmission (G&T) cooperative providing wholesale electrical requirements for 24 distribution cooperatives and 27 municipal utilities. With a service territory covering 44,000 square miles across four states – Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois – Dairyland's serves the energy needs of more than 750,000 people in the Upper Midwest.

A cornerstone of our operation is the development, operation and maintenance of 3,750 miles of transmission lines and over 400 distribution substations. A recent project, the Cardinal-Hickory Creek transmission line, offers a case study on the challenges posed by protracted legal disputes. The 102-mile, 345-kilovolt line has long been known to grid experts, consumers, and regulators to be vital for grid reliability, affordable electricity, and expanded access to energy. However, the project suffered years-long delays due to litigation concerning a 1.1-mile segment traversing the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge. Lawsuits and court orders, including a federal court injunction barring a necessary and carefully negotiated land exchange between project owners and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, added \$156 million in project costs and prevented it from meeting the planned June 2024 in-service date. After nearly 14 years, the Cardinal-Hickory Creek project is now finally complete and fully operational as of September 2024. The line provides economic, reliability, and grid stability benefits for the entire region, enabling the interconnection of new energy resources and reducing congestion on the grid.

The SPEED Act's litigation and judicial review reforms would help prevent similar costly delays in the future, supporting a timely path to both energy reliability and affordability. We urge you to prioritize passage of the SPEED Act to ensure responsible energy projects are not held hostage by lengthy legal disputes, while still upholding robust environmental standards and opportunities for public input.

Again, thank you for your attention to this matter. Dairyland Power Cooperative stands ready to assist as Congress addresses these urgent challenges and works towards a reliable, affordable energy future.

Sincerely,

**Brent Ridge**  
President and CEO

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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