

November 19, 2025

Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
U.S. House of Representatives
Re: H.R. 4776 SPEED Act –
Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development Act

Dear Representative Westerman:

Like many other states in the western United States, Idaho is home to vast public lands that define our economy, our communities, and our way of life. The stewardship of these lands involves complex but essential cooperation between federal, state, and local governments. Because the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) governs decision-making on these lands, Idaho county officials have firsthand experience with NEPA's processes, opportunities, and limitations. Through years of active participation, Idaho counties have gained an understanding of how NEPA can function more effectively while still honoring its original purpose. This H.R. 4776, the Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development Act (SPEED Act) represents a timely and meaningful opportunity to improve the NEPA process so that it works more smoothly for everyone.

The Idaho Association of Counties (IAC), representing all 44 Idaho counties, appreciates the opportunity to provide comments in support of the SPEED Act. Idaho's public land makeup is among the largest in the nation with approximately 62% of Idaho's land area being federally managed. As a result, county governments in Idaho are uniquely impacted by federal land management decisions and are familiar with how NEPA shapes everything from forest management and wildfire mitigation to transportation, recreation, and rural economic development.

Within NEPA, the "Cooperating Agency" status is essential for ensuring that county governments have a meaningful role in shaping analyses and decisions. Idaho counties bring jurisdictional authority, technical expertise, and extensive on-the-ground knowledge that would be better utilized under the SPEED Act. Maintaining and strengthening cooperating agency provisions results in better-informed decisions, stronger resource protections, fewer conflicts, and projects that reflect genuine community consensus.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that H.R. 4776 include language that preserves and reinforces cooperating agency opportunities for county governments, like the following:

(3) Cooperating agency:

The lead agency may, with respect to a proposed agency action, designate any Federal, State, Tribal, or local agency (including counties, boroughs, parishes, and other political subdivisions of a State) that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposal to serve as a cooperating agency. A cooperating agency may, not later than a date specified in the schedule established by the lead agency, submit comments to the lead agency. Such comments from Federal cooperating agencies shall be limited to matters relating to the proposed agency action with respect to which such Federal cooperating agency has jurisdiction by law.

IAC thanks you for your leadership and for considering these recommendations. We look forward to continuing our partnership to ensure that NEPA works efficiently, transparently, and collaboratively.

Respectfully,



Seth Grigg
Executive Director