

WASHINGTON - The National Association of Counties (NACo) issued the following statement in response to the passage of the Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act (H.R. 4776), which advanced out of the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources on November 20.

NACo Executive Director Matthew Chase said:

"Counties are pleased that the SPEED Act would reform the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by streamlining federal permitting and strengthening county involvement in decision-making. We support commonsense permitting reforms, and the provisions in this bill would guarantee us a seat at the table during federal environmental reviews.

"The text of this bill states that 'counties, boroughs, parishes, and other political subdivisions of a State' can be named as cooperating local agencies during the NEPA process. This vital provision recognizes the expertise of counties as intergovernmental partners and would codify that partnership in federal law.

"If enacted, the SPEED Act would implement needed permitting reforms that ensure decisions are timely, effective and incorporate the input of local experts.

"Counties thank Chairman Bruce Westerman and Rep. Jared Golden for their leadership in sponsoring this bipartisan legislation and urge its swift passage in the House."

The changes proposed by the SPEED Act would be the most significant updates to NEPA since the law was implemented over 50 years ago. Arduous NEPA processes often cause delays and increased costs for counties undertaking infrastructure, energy, land management or broadband projects. If passed, the bill would further reform the permitting process by reducing redundancy and implementing timeline adjustments.

For more information about counties and the SPEED Act, click [here](#).