



TEAM: LAND USE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Issue Experts:

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SUBJECT: MODERNIZING FEDERAL PERMITTING TO ACCELERATE HOUSING SUPPLY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Capital Region faces a persistent housing shortage, rising construction costs, and delayed infrastructure investments, all of which constrain economic growth and exacerbate affordability challenges. At the federal level, outdated and unpredictable permitting processes are a major contributor to these problems. The Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act and the Promoting Efficient Review for Modern Infrastructure Today (PERMIT) Act offer a timely opportunity to modernize federal permitting while maintaining strong environmental protections. Congress should act decisively to refine, advance, and pass these bills – particularly the SPEED Act – through a bipartisan process that balances environmental stewardship with the urgent need for housing, jobs, and economic development.

REQUESTED ACTION:

First, Congress should ensure that the refinement of the SPEED Act remains bipartisan and grounded in practical implementation. Permitting reform is not a partisan issue; it affects housing affordability and attainability, infrastructure delivery, clean energy deployment, and economic competitiveness nationwide. The U.S. House and Senate should convene bipartisan working groups, including state and local governments, environmental organizations, builders, labor, and infrastructure providers, to refine the bill's provisions and build a durable consensus.

Second, Congress should preserve the SPEED Act's core objective: streamlining the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process without weakening substantive environmental standards. Refinements should focus on:



- Establishing clear, enforceable timelines for environmental reviews and agency decisions.
- Narrowing the scope of environmental analysis to focus on reasonably foreseeable impacts, avoiding duplicative or speculative reviews.
- Coordinating interagency reviews and regulatory guidance to prevent serial delays.
- Limiting litigation abuse while preserving meaningful public participation and judicial oversight.

Third, the federal government should provide agencies with clear guidance and sufficient resources to implement the SPEED Act effectively. Permitting reform must be paired with training, staffing, and accountability measures to ensure that agencies meet deadlines and produce high-quality environmental analyses.

Finally, Congress should move expeditiously to pass the SPEED Act and align it with the PERMIT Act to ensure consistency across NEPA and Clean Water Act permitting. Predictability across federal processes is essential for long-term investment and planning.

HOW THIS SUPPORTS BUSINESSES:

- **Faster project approvals:** Streamlining environmental review and permitting reduces delays, helping businesses move projects forward more quickly and predictably.
- **Lower development costs:** Shorter timelines and clearer rules reduce carrying costs, legal expenses, and uncertainty, making investments more feasible.
- **Greater certainty for investment:** Clear, consistent permitting standards improve predictability, encouraging private investment and long-term business planning.
- **Job creation and economic growth:** Faster approvals accelerate construction, infrastructure, and clean energy projects, creating jobs and expanding the regional economy.
- **Support for innovation and clean energy:** Efficient permitting helps businesses deploy renewable energy, advanced manufacturing, and infrastructure projects more quickly.



HOW THIS SUPPORTS RESIDENTS OF OUR REGION:

- **Expanded housing supply:** Faster permitting helps deliver more housing, easing shortages and moderating rent and home price increases.
- **Improved affordability:** Reduced project delays and costs can lower housing and infrastructure costs for residents.
- **More local jobs:** Accelerated development and infrastructure investment generate construction and long-term employment opportunities.
- **Better infrastructure and services:** Streamlined approvals speed delivery of transportation, water, energy, and climate-resilience projects.
- **Environmental and public health benefits:** Efficient review processes can advance clean energy, transit, and sustainability projects while maintaining environmental protections.

The SPEED Act and PERMIT Act are pragmatic, balanced reforms to a federal permitting system that no longer meets the nation's needs. Congress should refine the SPEED Act through bipartisan collaboration, preserve its focus on clarity and timeliness, and move swiftly to pass both bills. Doing so will protect the environment, expand the housing supply, create jobs, and strengthen the U.S. economy.