

## THE SITUATION



The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is one of our bedrock conservation laws. It does not impose regulations on individuals or businesses. Instead, it requires federal agencies to take a "look before you leap" approach and **consider the potential environmental consequences of major federal actions**. The law passed Congress with overwhelming bipartisan support and was signed by President Richard Nixon in 1970.

## HOW'D WE GET TO THIS POINT?

The GOP has voted more than a dozen times this Congress to **undermine NEPA**. Republicans have waged a campaign to attack NEPA – misrepresenting the facts and inflating statistics on litigation and delays associated with the Act's requirements.

## WHY SHOULD AMERICANS CARE?

NEPA has proven to be a remarkably effective tool for ensuring that people have a say in federal government decisions that could impact the places they live. **Because of NEPA, the public has the ability to know in advance about major federal actions and the right to provide input and have their voices heard**. Before NEPA, a disproportionate share of heavily polluting projects ended up being sited in poor and minority communities that lacked political connections.

## WHAT'S THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT?

Chipping away at NEPA - or **gutting it, as House Republicans want to do** - would make many American communities **worse places to live** and would run counter to Republican calls for more public demand for government transparency.

## THE FACTS

**NEPA passed the House and Senate unanimously** in 1969 and Congress has never passed legislation to repeal or significantly weaken it.

**No NEPA could mean more unintended consequences** such as pollution or damage to fish and wildlife and their habitat from hastily conceived, poorly reasoned government projects or permits.

## WHAT'S CONGRESS DOING?

Nothing positive. The Committee has voted numerous times to pass legislation that undermines NEPA.



**Democrats believe NEPA is an important environmental justice tool** that levels the playing field and saves taxpayer dollars. It helps people to maintain and improve their quality of life by ensuring that they have a voice in decisions that impact their communities.



**The House GOP despises NEPA because it identifies harmful, wasteful, and unwise projects and exposes those weaknesses**. They have attempted to waive or weaken NEPA requirements for natural resources extraction activities from commercial fishing to timber harvest to mineral leasing. They have even protested the Obama Administration's issuance of guidance to federal agencies on how to incorporate greenhouse gas emissions and climate change impacts into NEPA.

## HOW DO WE MOVE FORWARD?

We need to get out the message: **strong NEPA = sound decisions**. We must reaffirm the value of NEPA and fight back against Republican attempts to undermine it or misapply it to activities that have inherent environmental benefits (like National Monument designations under the Antiquities Act).