

VOTE NO ON H.R. 4776, THE “SPEED ACT”



H.R. 4776 is a dangerous attempt to gut America's foundational environmental law under the guise of "permitting reform."

Why NEPA Matters

For more than 50 years, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) has been the nation's bedrock environmental review law and first line of defense against ill-informed, reckless federal decision-making. Enacted in 1970 with overwhelming bipartisan support, NEPA does something simple but important: it requires federal agencies to “look before they leap” and understand the environmental, health, and community impacts of major federal projects and actions before approving them. NEPA has been crucial to fostering government transparency and public engagement.

NEPA has driven basic due diligence that has helped prevent costly mistakes, protect our air, water, and public health, and gives communities an opportunity to have their voices heard in decisions that shape where they live, work, and raise their families. NEPA has saved taxpayers billions in avoided cleanup costs, prevented environmental disasters, and led to better project designs by requiring agencies to evaluate alternatives and meaningfully engage with affected communities and Tribal nations.

In an era of costly climate disasters and continuing pollution burdens, NEPA helps ensure federal decisions account for emissions, environmental justice impacts, and the long-term health and wellbeing of **every** American.

WHAT THE SPEED ACT ACTUALLY DOES

RIGS THE PROCESS FOR PREFERRED INDUSTRIES

This bill rewrites NEPA primarily to favor preferred, polluting industries. The bill is not an “all of the above” energy bill to help lower costs for Americans – it is a polluters above all bill stuffed with handouts and loopholes primarily benefitting the oil, gas, and mining industries while failing to provide *real* certainty for clean energy developers grappling with the administration’s permitting blockade.

HANDCUFFS AGENCIES’ ABILITY TO PROTECT AMERICANS FROM DISASTERS

H.R. 4776 restricts what federal agencies can consider during the environmental review process. It limits review to only certain near-term and proximate impacts, preventing agencies from considering the full scope of a project’s consequences. The vague language in the legislation goes beyond settled court interpretations and will trigger endless litigation over what’s in or out of scope, creating exactly the uncertainty and delay Republicans claim to oppose.

KEEPS AGENCIES IN THE PAST

This bill prevents agencies from incorporating new scientific information into decisions – including from project developers – forcing them to make choices based on outdated data that doesn’t reflect current realities.

SILENCES AMERICANS

It slams the courthouse door on communities trying to hold the federal government accountable by creating confusing new legal standards that preclude almost anyone from suing, slashing the statute of limitations from six years to five months, and preventing courts from questioning or pausing projects even when environmental reviews are fraudulent, incomplete, or nonexistent. Worse still, under H.R. 4776’s proposed reforms, courts couldn’t halt a project even if it’s proven to threaten public health or violate the law.

WHAT THE SPEED ACT DOES NOT DO

SOLVE THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION’S ATTACKS ON CLEAN ENERGY OR THE AFFORDABILITY CRISIS

While Republicans added amendments claiming to provide permit ‘certainty,’ in truth they do nothing to restart the clean energy permitting the administration has frozen or to prevent future arbitrary restrictions on clean energy.

ADDRESS THE TRUE CAUSES OF DELAYS

The most significant permitting bottlenecks are understaffed and under-resourced permitting agencies stretched beyond capacity, made worse by the administration’s attacks on the federal workforce. When Congressional Democrats allocated \$1 billion to permitting staff and technology, timelines for Environmental Impact Statements dropped by almost a year and a half from 2019 to 2024.

ADDRESS TRANSMISSION INFRASTRUCTURE

Any serious permitting reform must address transmission lines essential for connecting new energy projects to the grid. The SPEED Act **doesn’t** – making it clear this bill isn’t actually about accelerating infrastructure, it’s about weakening protections to make billionaire polluters richer faster.

Democrats support practical, genuinely bipartisan reforms that speed clean energy and infrastructure deployment while maintaining appropriate environmental protections, respecting Tribal consultation, protecting community input, and giving developers real certainty.

The SPEED Act fails on every count. It won’t reliably speed up good projects; it will greenlight bad ones. It could trap everything in new litigation. It won’t protect communities; it will strip them of their voice and their day in court.

America deserves permitting reform that builds faster AND smarter, not a bill that sacrifices public health and government accountability to benefit polluting industries.