



September 22, 2015

United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), a national construction industry trade association with 70 chapters representing nearly 21,000 chapter members, I am writing to express our support for H.R. 348, the “Responsibly and Professionally Invigorating Development (RAPID) Act.” The bill establishes procedures to streamline the regulatory review, environmental decision making, and permitting process for major federal actions that are construction activities undertaken, reviewed, or funded by federal agencies.

Hundreds of major federal projects have been unnecessarily delayed or abandoned, resulting in millions of jobs being deferred or never created because of a dysfunctional permitting system. This legislation would provide a streamlined process for developers to obtain environmental permits and approvals for their projects in a timely and efficient manner, fostering job creation and economic growth in the process.

The bill sets new deadlines to complete the review process for an environmental assessment and the creation of an environmental impact statement—both of which are required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In addition, it allows lead agencies to accept existing relevant environmental documents for similar projects, including those prepared under state laws that satisfy or exceed NEPA standards. Finally, this legislation adopts established concepts, definitions and best practices to ensure that the federal review and permitting process is efficient and transparent.

The need to create jobs is imperative for the construction industry, and so is the need for regulatory reform. ABC applauds the House for taking steps to alleviate regulatory burdens on America’s job builders, and urges support for H.R. 348.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey Burr
Vice President, Government Affairs