



September 10, 2025

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jared Huffman
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Westerman, Ranking Member Huffman and Members of the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources:

On behalf of Associated Builders and Contractors, a national construction industry trade association with 67 chapters and more than 23,000 members, I write to thank you for holding a [legislative hearing](#) on [H.R. 573](#), the Studying NEPA's Impact on Projects Act, [H.R. 4503](#), the ePermit Act, and [H.R. 4776](#), the Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development Act. ABC supports these bills, which streamline the permitting process and provide greater transparency for the construction industry, project developers and the public.

Background

The National Environmental Policy Act requires environmental reviews of major federal actions before a final agency decision. This statute frequently applies to federal permitting decisions on major construction projects, requiring agencies to prepare detailed environmental analyses and consider public input before issuing permits.

Congress passed NEPA with the intent of ensuring that federal agencies make informed decisions about the environmental impacts of their actions. However, outdated federal systems, abuse of the judicial process and inconsistent interpretations of NEPA have mired the environmental review process in delays and uncertainty. These challenges present the regulated community, federal agency employees and the public with a bureaucratic labyrinth that hinders economic opportunities and increases infrastructure costs.

Legislative Reforms

ABC is pleased that this hearing focuses on legislation that addresses the construction industry's concerns with NEPA. Specifically, ABC supports the following bills, which would increase transparency for all stakeholders, enable outcome-based policy analysis and determinations and bring the permit application and review process into the digital age.

- **H.R.573**, the Studying NEPA's Impact on Projects Act, introduced by Rep. Rudy Yakym, R-Ind., which would provide much-needed transparency into the costs and time associated with environmental impact statements and environmental assessments required by NEPA. By directing the Council on Environmental Quality to issue an annual report on NEPA's impact to Congress, the legislation enhances policymakers' ability to identify improvements to environmental review processes.
- **H.R.4503**, the ePermit Act, introduced by Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-S.D., which would modernize the environmental review and authorization process. By directing the CEQ to establish an online authorization portal, the legislation would provide federal agency staff, project sponsors and Congress real-time information on the environmental review

process, while eliminating bureaucratic obstacles that hinder progress tracking and informed decisions.

- **H.R.4776**, the SPEED Act, introduced by Rep. Bruce Westerman, R-Ark., which would codify NEPA's intent is to prescribe the necessary processes rather than mandate particular results, narrow the scope of NEPA review, clarify that federal funding and assistance should not be the determinant of whether an agency action is determined to be a "major Federal action," and set reasonable timelines for filing judicial review claims. These reforms would reduce permitting delays and the potential for activist groups to block projects they oppose through excessive delays that can ultimately lead to project cancellations, providing project sponsors and contractors with increased certainty that enables them to plan and invest with confidence.

Conclusion

ABC supports H.R.573, H.R.4503 and H.R.4776's purpose of promoting a predictable and transparent permitting process for all stakeholders. These bills would enable the construction industry to plan and execute even the most complex projects while safeguarding our communities, maintaining a healthy environment and successfully stewarding public funds.

ABC appreciates the opportunity to comment on the committee's legislative business and urges it to report the legislation considered in this hearing to the floor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kristen Swearingen', written in a cursive style.

Kristen Swearingen
Vice President, Government Affairs