



March 5, 2014

Dear Representative:

On behalf of Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), a national construction industry trade association with 70 chapters representing nearly 22,000 chapter members, I am writing to express our support for H.R. 2641, the “Responsibly and Professionally Invigorating Development (RAPID) Act.” This legislation would streamline the process for developers to obtain environmental permits so that it is more efficient and transparent.

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 RAPID act sets new deadlines to complete the review process: an 18-month maximum for an environmental assessment, and a 36-month maximum for the creation of an environmental impact statement—both of which are required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The bill also establishes a 180-day statute of limitations and a provision requiring outside groups to get on the record early in the process in order to have standing for any subsequent legal challenges. 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 urge support for H.R. 2641.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey Burr  
Vice President, Government Affairs