



Board of County Commissioners

Commissioner Mike Lane – District 1
Commissioner Craig Fuller – District 2
Commissioner Wendell Koontz – District 3

October 7, 2025

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: H.R. 4776, The Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act

Dear Chairman Westerman:

Delta County is in strong support for H.R. 4776, the bipartisan Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act of 2025. We believe reforms to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) are long overdue and are required to address excessive review processes that result in delays, and, in many cases, inflated costs on critical projects. Delta County support changes in federal statute that would:

- Prevent or reduce duplicative reviews at both the state and federal levels with analysis limited to project pertinent information.
- Prevent political interference and prevent agencies from imposing personal political preferences into NEPA reviews.
- Allow agencies to share legislative categorical exclusions and prevent litigation on the establishment of a categorical exclusion.
- Require agencies to consider only direct environmental effects associated with the project;
- Clarify that courts may not substitute their own judgement for that of the subject matter experts at the agencies regarding the direct environmental effects of the project.
- Limit judicial review times and discourage frivolous lawsuits.

Federal, state, and local statutes and policies hold project proponents to the highest standards in resource development globally. However, the existing NEPA process has suffered from protracted project delays and frequent litigation that hinder the review process and the ability of agency officials to fulfill their obligations to analyze the potential environmental impacts of permitting actions. Projects from renewable energy transmission lines to lithium mines now take 20 to 30 years for NEPA analysis, review, and litigation which is among the longest timeframes in the world. This disadvantageous timeline is driven in large part by regulatory factors, including the current NEPA process and associated legal challenges which in some cases delay responsible mining operations by years or even decades.



The SPEED Act is a welcome package of reforms to refocus NEPA on analyzing specific actions in a timely manner so that agency officials can make informed decisions and responsible projects can move forward expeditiously. The SPEED Act focuses reviews on the potential environmental effects proximate to agency actions, clarifies the scope of "major federal actions" appropriate for review, eliminating duplicative multi-agency NEPA review, addresses NEPA review time delays, and establishes an appropriate statute of limitations for challenging NEPA reviews. By making these commonsense improvements H.R. 4776 will restore the original design of NEPA to inform agency decision makers on the potential effects of decisions under consideration by the relevant agency and allow projects to move forward without the distracted review of matters extraneous to the decision at issue, frivolous litigation, and endless delays.

Delta County is grateful to the bill sponsors from both parties for bringing forward these much-needed reforms, and we look forward to working with you and the House Committee on Natural Resources to advance this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Delta County Commissioners

Wendell A. Koontz
Wendell A. Koontz, Chair

Mike Lane
Mike Lane, Vice-Chair

Craig Fuller
Craig Fuller, Commissioner