



Rio Grande County
Board of County Commissioners
925 6th Street, Room 207,
Del Norte, CO 81132

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

August 6, 2025

Subj: Letter of Support for the Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development Act (SPEED Act)

Dear Congressman Westerman:

On behalf of the Rio Grande County Board of County Commissioners, I am honored to provide this letter of support for the Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development Act (SPEED Act).

We believe reforms to the National Environmental Policy Act are long overdue and necessary to address excessive review processes that result in delays, and, in many cases, inflated costs on critical projects. We fully support congressional efforts to:

- Prevent or reduce duplicative reviews at both the state and federal levels, limited to only pertinent information;
- Prevent political interference and prevent agencies from interjecting 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 environmental effects directly caused by the project;
- Clarify that courts may not substitute their own judgement for that of the agency regarding the environmental effects that the agency considered in the environmental document;
- Limit civil action and reduce the time spent in litigation.

Of greatest importance to Rio Grande County are reforms that minimize or eliminate NEPA review requirements triggered by funding and grants passed from the federal level to the local level. As a small rural County, NEPA requirements associated with federal funding awarded to counties and municipalities have the potential of delaying or killing important projects at the local level. Small

local governments do not have the financial or personnel resources to address the NEPA requirements. These requirements are typically contracted to specialized consultants followed by lengthy delays as the various reports and studies slowly make their way through the required review and approval processes. The NEPA requirements often add months or years to a project's completion timeline and add significant costs. The reality for Rio Grande County is that NEPA requirements are inhibitors to the pursuit of federal funding and, essentially, a barrier to participation for our county.

Relief from NEPA is welcome and we enthusiastically support the SPEED Act.

Respectfully submitted,



Tyler Ratzlaff
Chair, Board of County Commissioners

Copy to:

The Honorable Jeff Hurd, US House of Representatives CO-03