



To: The Honorable Bruce Westerman, Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources  
The Honorable Pete Stauber, Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources

From: <sup>224</sup> T. Lane Wilson, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, The Williams Companies, Inc.

Date: May 2, 2025

Re: House Committee on Natural Resources Reconciliation Permitting Provisions

On behalf of The Williams Companies, Inc., we write to express our support for the permitting provisions aimed at streamlining the federal permitting process.

Williams is a Fortune 500 infrastructure company with operations spanning the natural gas value chain, including gathering, processing, interstate transmission, storage, and wholesale marketing and trading of natural gas and NGLs. We operate 33,000 miles of pipelines and move about one-third of the natural gas used every day in America.

As you know, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is a procedural disclosure statute designed to outline an interagency process to inform environmental policymaking decisions, not to mandate particular results or specific outcomes. Unfortunately, some courts have allowed serial litigants to use the statute as a substantive blockade, turning NEPA into a never-ending circus of frivolous litigation. Not surprisingly, according to the Department of Justice (DOJ), NEPA is the most litigated federal environmental statute.<sup>i</sup> Notably, a study published in the Environmental Law Institute (ELI) analyzed 355 major transportation and energy infrastructure projects between 2010-2018 and found that 28 percent of the projects requiring an environmental impact statement faced predevelopment legal challenges and 89 percent of those challenged involved a claim of a NEPA violation.<sup>ii</sup>

The House Natural Resources Committee's reconciliation provisions focused on NEPA would provide more certainty, in the form of clear deadlines, for the finalization of NEPA documents and help prevent delays (and reduce expense) due to frivolous and politicized litigation seeking to delay or cancel linear infrastructure. Ensuring that a permit appeal cannot be based on some perceived deficiency in a NEPA analysis or procedure (e.g., an environmental assessment versus an environmental impact statement or the scope of an analysis) helps provide project sponsors with more certainty to make business decisions. This certainty will encourage capital investment in projects necessary to meet rapidly growing energy reliability and affordability demands from American consumers and industry. Put simply, courts should not have the freedom to decide that a linear infrastructure project with all of its substantive permits cannot be built based on a technical error in the procedural NEPA process, particularly when the lead agency has determined that the NEPA analysis is sufficient and that the myriad environmental statutes and permitting processes that apply to the construction and operation of a major infrastructure project will serve to ensure compliance with environmental standards.

We appreciate your continued leadership and efforts to streamline and modernize the permitting process to ensure long-standing, durable reforms for the natural gas industry, especially for pipelines. We look forward to working with you, your hard-working staff, and other Committees of Jurisdiction in the House and Senate on reforming the permitting process to support America's energy dominance and growing energy needs.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11932>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.elr.info/articles/elr-articles/nepa-litigation-over-large-energy-and-transport-infrastructure-projects>