

March 27, 2023

The Honorable Steve Scalise
Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
2049 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Scalise,

I write today on behalf of America's 900 electric cooperatives in support of efforts to improve the federal environmental review and permitting process. The proposals to modernize the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) contained in H.R. 1, the Lower Energy Costs Act, represent a significant step in the right direction. As our nation increasingly relies on electricity to power the economy, policymakers should support solutions that modernize NEPA and facilitate coordinated, consistent, and timely agency decision-making. Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, the electrification of transportation and other sectors of the economy could require a doubling of U.S. generation capacity by 2050. In addition, a recent study from Princeton University found America may need to triple its electric transmission infrastructure by 2050. As we plan for a future that depends more heavily on electricity to power the American economy, the efficient siting and permitting of electric infrastructure projects will be a key success factor.

Electric co-ops play a leading role in the ongoing transformation of the electric sector and often need to obtain permits from federal agencies to construct and maintain electric generation, transmission, and distribution infrastructure. Electric co-ops support the appropriate consideration of potential environmental impacts of energy projects during the permitting process. However, the existing process takes too long, is too expensive, and impedes the ability of co-ops to meet the current and future needs of our consumers and communities.

Robust reforms are needed to remove barriers and accelerate the construction of energy infrastructure. Deploying today's energy infrastructure requires a modernized regulatory approach. The process for conducting federal environmental reviews must be improved for all projects, regardless of fuel source or type. That's especially true as we build for the future and work to ensure electric co-ops, and our nation more broadly, can keep the lights on at a cost American families and businesses can afford.

NRECA stands ready to work with you on the Lower Energy Costs Act and other efforts to improve and modernize environmental review and permitting processes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Matheson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jim Matheson
CEO, NRECA

cc:

The Honorable Tom Emmer
Majority Whip
U.S. House of Representatives
H-107 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

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