

July 23, 2020

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

The undersigned trade associations and labor unions oppose amendment #72 to Division C of H.R. 7608, the first package of appropriations legislation that would block implementation of recently completed reforms to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations. These important reforms will ensure a federal permitting process that is predictable and transparent, where “go” or “no go” decisions are made in a reasonable timeframe, and facilitates getting Americans back to work rebuilding critical infrastructure that will move people, goods, energy and information.

Our organizations strongly support a thorough environmental review process for projects under NEPA, but it should not take longer to get a decision on a permit than it would for construction of a project. Unfortunately, that is often the case today. NEPA’s permitting procedures have not been comprehensively updated since the 1970s and since then, the review times have increased to 4.5 years on average and to almost seven years for transportation projects. Reducing delays for sustainable transportation projects would reduce congestion related emissions and improve the quality of life for communities.

Building the economy of the future means addressing the growing demand for critical infrastructure, including roads, bridges, railways, airways, waterways, transit, housing, telecommunications, and energy projects of all types. A modernized NEPA process would improve our ability to meet that demand. As the U.S. is undergoing important conversations about inequality of opportunity, the predictability and transparency provided by these reforms can accelerate investment in infrastructure such as better access to broadband and mass transit that will serve underprivileged communities and create economic opportunities.

The NEPA updates are critically important to a broad group of stakeholders including agriculture, construction, manufacturing, building trades unions, renewable and conventional energy, surface transportation, and broadband. We remain committed to working with legislators, regulators, and all stakeholders to return NEPA to its original intent—a timely and focused review of environmental impacts—rather than a tool to delay projects for years and even decades. We urge you to oppose any amendment to FY2021 appropriations language such as amendment #72 that would block these important NEPA updates.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association  
American Chemistry Council  
American Coke and Coal Chemicals Institute  
American Council for Capital Formation  
American Council of Engineering Companies  
American Exploration & Production Council  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Forest & Paper Association  
American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers

American Gas Association  
American Highway Users Alliance  
American Petroleum Institute  
American Public Gas Association  
American Road & Transportation Builders Association  
American Sheep Industry Association  
American Trucking Associations  
American Wood Council  
Associated Builders and Contractors  
Associated General Contractors of America  
Association of American Railroads  
Association of Oil Pipe Lines  
Consumer Energy Alliance  
Energy Equipment & Infrastructure Alliance  
Federal Forest Resource Coalition  
The Fertilizer Institute  
Hardwood Federation  
Independent Petroleum Association of America  
LNG Allies, The US LNG Association  
National Association of Chemical Distributors  
National Association of Home Builders  
National Association of Manufacturers  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
National Lime Association  
National Mining Association  
National Ocean Industries Association  
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association  
National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association  
North America's Building Trades Unions  
Portland Cement Association  
Public Lands Council  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce