

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