



March 12, 2026

The Honorable Dr. Mike Kennedy  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1626 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Kennedy:

On behalf of the undersigned trade associations representing companies that invest in and develop energy resources on federal lands, we strongly support your bill to reauthorize the Permit Processing Improvement Fund (PPIF) and respectfully urge Congress to enact a straightforward extension of the PPIF Fee Account before September 30, 2026.

Congress created the PPIF in the bipartisan Energy Policy Act of 2005 to provide high-volume Bureau of Land Management (BLM) offices with dedicated resources to process oil and natural gas permits and other authorizations in a timely manner. For nearly 20 years, this program has helped sustain responsible onshore oil and natural gas development while supporting federal and Tribal partners and protecting important public land resources. It is a proven tool that aligns permitting capacity with real-world workload and supports BLM staff conducting frontline work in field offices across the West.

The PPIF directs funding to priority BLM Project Offices in Colorado, New Mexico, North Dakota/Montana, Utah, and Wyoming and allows the Interior Secretary to designate additional offices as needs evolve. PPIF dollars support approvals for applications for permits to drill, rights-of-way, environmental analyses, sundry notices, and surface-use plans, as well as interagency coordination and staff hiring and training. The program authorizes co-location of personnel from other federal agencies—such as the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Environmental Protection Agency—so that key reviews can be coordinated and completed more efficiently.

Importantly, the PPIF is funded entirely by industry, not annual appropriations. The Fee Account is funded by Applications for Permits to Drill (APD) fees that were initially set at \$9,500 and indexed to inflation, now exceeding \$12,000 per application. In recent years, this account is estimated to have generated on the order of \$50–55 million annually and supported roughly 220 full-time equivalent positions focused on permitting work, according to the U.S. Department of the Interior. These resources have enabled BLM to reduce application backlogs, shorten processing times, and use regular appropriations to strengthen inspections and monitoring in the field.

The PPIF is widely regarded by BLM and energy producers as a success. For example:

- In Utah, Project Offices in Vernal have been central to processing high volumes of drilling permits and rights-of-way in the Uinta Basin, helping keep environmental reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and interagency consultations moving forward.
- BLM has reported that PPIF Project Offices “helped create and sustain jobs and a robust economy, while also protecting consumers, public health, and sensitive public land resources and uses.”
- BLM has also reported that PPIF-supported offices have handled nearly 90 percent of total federal drilling permit approvals nationwide in recent years, while achieving roughly a 30 percent decrease in processing times.
- Companies reported that in 2025 BLM’s Carlsbad Field Office in New Mexico approved approximately 4,000 drilling permits, tackling a major portion of a backlog of roughly 15,000 permits.
- The Farmington Field Office in New Mexico has supported important Tribal development of oil and gas resources for multiple tribes and individual Navajo Nation allottees in the San Juan Basin.
- During the 2025 government shutdown, companies highlighted PPIF’s flexibility when BLM Wyoming was able to support additional staff at the Pinedale Field Office—even though it was not formally designated as a Project Office—demonstrating the program’s ability to surge resources where they are most needed.

These are exactly the kinds of practical, on-the-ground outcomes that Congress intended when it created the PPIF: faster, more predictable permitting and better coordination among agencies, without sacrificing environmental safeguards.

We appreciate your leadership on this issue and your commitment to efficient, responsible development of federal energy resources. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to ensure timely passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Western Energy Alliance  
Independent Petroleum Association of America  
Energy Workforce & Technology Council  
U.S. Oil & Gas Association  
Colorado Oil & Gas Association  
Independent Petroleum Association of New Mexico  
Montana Petroleum Association  
New Mexico Oil & Gas Association  
North Dakota Petroleum Council  
Permian Basin Petroleum Association  
Petroleum Association of Wyoming  
Utah Petroleum Association  
West Slope Colorado Oil & Gas Association