



June 15, 2020

The Honorable Ted Cruz
127A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Cotton
326 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable James Lankford
316 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Cruz, Cotton, and Lankford:

On behalf of National Taxpayers Union, the nation's oldest taxpayer advocacy organization, I write to express our strong support for your legislation S. 3926, the "Federal Permitting Modernization Act of 2020." Your legislation would bring much needed reform to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by accelerating the federal review process of infrastructure projects. By streamlining regulations and codifying common sense deadlines, we believe S. 3926 will help reduce unnecessary regulatory hurdles that cause too many critical projects to languish. We are proud to endorse S. 3926 and support its swift enactment.

As you are keenly aware, NEPA mandates federal agencies to consider the environmental impact of their actions, including infrastructure projects that require permits from the federal government. Though well-intentioned, NEPA has had the unintended consequence of driving up costs and adding seemingly endless delays to potential infrastructure projects. According to the Department of Treasury, the average time to complete a NEPA study increased from 2.2 years in the 1970s, to 4.4 years in the 1980s, to 6.6 years in 2011.

For taxpayers and private investors that finance these projects, it should be unacceptable that these needless delays continue to swell. The United States has a long tradition of building impressive structures, and the government-driven delays ingrained into our permitting process undermines this history.

Thankfully, your legislation brings much needed reforms to streamline the approval process and roll back burdensome delays. The new deadlines laid out in your bill would convey a greater degree of certainty in a growing market and reduce the capability of the federal government to unduly limit the potential of the construction industry. Importantly, by cutting delays, builders will be able to employ more workers and bring their infrastructure projects online ahead of schedule and under budget.

We are proud to support the Federal Permitting Modernization Act of 2020. We look forward to working towards its enactment as a standalone bill, or as part of a comprehensive infrastructure package to boost the economy.

Sincerely,

Thomas Aiello
Policy and Government Affairs Manager