Holland & Hart



Amelia Jenkins Morales

Senior Director of Federal Affairs
202.654.6929
Washington, DC
AFJenkinsMorales@hollandhart.com



Andrew Wheeler

Partner and Head of Federal Affairs
202.654.6936
Washington, DC
arwheeler@hollandhart.com



Peter Rindfuss

Federal Affairs Legislative Assistant
202.289.3493
Washington, DC
PBRindfuss@hollandhart.com

House Committee Advances SPEED Act: Major NEPA Reforms Target Permitting Delays

Insight — November 24, 2025

On November 20, 2025, the House Committee on Natural Resources (Committee) held a five-hour markup of multiple bills to amend the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The primary focus of the markup was H.R. 4776, the "Standard Permitting and Expediting Economic Development Act" (SPEED Act), sponsored by Chairman Bruce Westerman (R-AR). The SPEED Act is a product of extensive hearings over recent congresses and bipartisan negotiations with two moderate Democrats on the Committee, Congressmen Jared Golden from Maine and Adam Gray from California's Central Valley.

Key Takeaways:

- **Three Core Reforms:** Limits NEPA reviews to proximately caused effects, clarifies federal funding triggers, and imposes a 150-day statute of limitation.
- **Bipartisan Committee Passage:** The SPEED Act advanced with support from two Democrats (Golden, Gray) despite 23 failed Democratic amendments.
- **Senate Uncertainty:** House floor vote targeted before year-end, but Senate passage requires 60 votes.

Summary of Legislation

The goal of the SPEED Act is to remind project applicants, federal agencies, and the courts that NEPA is a procedural statute. The Committee's background memo argues that the 2023 NEPA amendments, under the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023, have not been as successful in reforming NEPA as congress intended because NEPA has been a "weapon used to…delay critical domestic energy projects." Further, the bill's sponsors advocate that the SPEED Act will codify key aspects of the Supreme Court decision earlier this year in *Seven County Infrastructure Coalition v. Eagle County, Colorado* (*Seven County*).

The bill also makes three other specific changes to the NEPA process:

- First, the SPEED Act clarifies that agencies may consider only those effects proximately caused by major federal actions.
- Second, the bill defines "major federal action" to ensure NEPA is not triggered simply because a project receives federal funding. The debate over what constitutes a "major federal action" escalated during the Biden Administration after numerous microchip

manufacturing projects designated to receive federal funding were slowed or stalled because it was not clear whether they constituted a “major federal action.”

- Finally, the timeline for a judicial challenge to a NEPA review is accelerated by establishing a 150-day statute of limitations for the filing of any such claim.

Summary of Markup

The Committee has long been a partisan arena where members often clash on policy and engage in a certain level of theatrics. Thursday's markup had a different tone as members were generally respectful of one another despite expressing party-line views.

Republicans, in their opening statements and comments on various amendments, generally argued the SPEED Act revisions align with recent court decisions—specifically the Supreme Court's decision in *Seven County*—and make necessary changes to develop energy and other major infrastructure projects. Republicans focused their comments on how the legislation would positively impact key projects in their districts.

Democrats opposing the bill made substantive arguments questioning whether the proposed reform language actually captures the authors' intent. Most Democrats repeatedly emphasized that the legislation does not do enough to help renewable energy projects whose progress has been halted because of Trump Administration interference through reduction in agency staff, frozen funding, and permit delays.

In total, 23 amendments offered by Democrats failed to get the requisite votes to modify the SPEED Act. Of all the amendments, only two amendments were adopted. One amendment related to NEPA application on tribal lands, offered by Congressman Jason Hurd (R-CO), was adopted on a voice vote. A second bipartisan amendment seeking to make it more difficult to revoke, rescind, withdraw, terminate, or suspend project authorizations was also adopted by voice vote.

Future of Legislation

Following the Committee's successful reporting of the legislation, Chairman Westerman told reporters he wants to bring the legislation to the floor before year's end. Meanwhile, across the chamber, Senators Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, are crafting a separate permitting reform measure to address the Trump Administration's actions on solar and wind projects. Regardless of what is passed in the House, the Senate will still require 60 votes to pass any NEPA reform legislation. The possible areas of agreement are:

- Amendments to the statute to incorporate *Seven County*.
- Provisions related to an administration's ability to cancel approved projects.
- Provisions related to federal funding triggering a “major federal

action" determination.

- Limiting language on judicial review related to review timelines and standing.

More Information

Our Federal Affairs team regularly works with clients to understand how changes in environmental statute, both at the federal and state level, and regulatory changes affect their project development.

Subscribe to get our Insights delivered to your inbox.

This publication is designed to provide general information on pertinent legal topics. The statements made are provided for educational purposes only. They do not constitute legal or financial advice nor do they necessarily reflect the views of Holland & Hart LLP or any of its attorneys other than the author(s). This publication is not intended to create an attorney-client relationship between you and Holland & Hart LLP. Substantive changes in the law subsequent to the date of this publication might affect the analysis or commentary. Similarly, the analysis may differ depending on the jurisdiction or circumstances. If you have specific questions as to the application of the law to your activities, you should seek the advice of your legal counsel.