



RPC Highlight

H.R. 4776 - *Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED)* Act
Sponsored by Chairman Bruce Westerman
Natural Resources Committee

Bill Summary:

The *SPEED* Act would clarify the scope of environmental and judicial review under the *National Environmental Policy Act* of 1969 (NEPA). This legislation would streamline the permitting process for all federal actions by reducing timelines and frivolous litigation, while clarifying statutory definitions that have been broadened due to regulatory and judicial action.

NEPA Reform

The *SPEED* Act would clarify that NEPA is a procedural statute, which provides an administrative framework without mandating certain outcomes. This legislation would also allow federal agencies to rely on the results of environmental review performed in compliance with other federal or state law, if the agency rules that such reviews meet the requirements under NEPA.

The *SPEED* Act would limit the scope of review to effects which are reasonably related to, or proximately caused by, the immediate actions related to a project under review. This legislation would also clarify that a federal agency may not delay the issuance of a final agency action on the basis of awaiting new research when it is not available within the timeframe provided under the *SPEED* Act.

Judicial Review

The *SPEED* Act would specify that the only action a court may take in NEPA cases is to remand the action back to the lead agency for remedy, with specific instructions for correction. Additionally, claims may only be made up to 150 days after the final agency action is made public, and the court must make final judgement within 180 days of a review being filed with the court.

Policy Background:

NEPA was enacted by Congress in 1969 to establish parameters for assessing and publicly disclosing the environmental impact of “major federal actions” prior to decision making. The Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA) defined “major federal action” as “an action that the agency carrying out such action determines is subject to substantial Federal control and responsibility.” The *SPEED* Act clarifies that an agency action is not considered a “major federal action” under NEPA solely because federal funding is involved.

Section 102 of NEPA requires federal agencies to prepare a detailed statement including:

- the environmental impact of the proposed action,
- any adverse environmental effects which cannot be avoided should the proposal be implemented,
- alternatives to the proposed action,
- the relationship between local short-term uses of man's environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity, and
- any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources which would be involved in the proposed action should it be implemented.

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) found NEPA reviews for Federal Highway Administration projects, on average, take more than seven years to proceed from a notice of intent (NOI) to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to issuance of a record of decision (ROD). A 2024 study showed that, on average, it takes 4.2 years after the publication of an environmental review to reach a conclusion in the corresponding legal challenge.

On May 29, 2025, the Supreme Court issued a unanimous decision on Seven County Infrastructure Coalition v. Eagle County, which contained many findings that the *SPEED* Act would codify, including that, “NEPA imposes no substantive environmental obligations or restrictions. NEPA is a purely procedural statute... Importantly, NEPA does not require the agency to weigh environmental consequences in any particular way.” Seven County also clarified that NEPA analysis for a project does not need to take into consideration effects of separate projects that are remote in time and place to the action under review and that lower courts are not to substitute their judgement for the agency.

Information from the Lead Sponsor's Office:

Press Release, July 25, 2025.

Committee Action:

This legislation received a markup and was reported favorably by the House Natural Resources Committee on November 20, 2025, by a vote of 25-18.

Additional materials from the House Natural Resources Committee can be found here.

Outside Group Support:

A list of supporters can be found here.