

# Cut the Red Tape: Why Smart Permitting Reform Protects Consumers and Powers Progress

This toolkit helps consumers, community leaders, and advocates speak confidently about why permitting reform matters, and how outdated approval processes are delaying energy affordability, grid reliability, and clean energy progress. Use this resource to talk with lawmakers and show support for commonsense reforms that accelerate safe, responsible energy project permitting

## Why Permitting Reform Matters

Permitting reform isn't just about energy — it affects the infrastructure we rely on every day. From roads and bridges to public transit systems, power plants, and clean energy projects, nearly all major developments must go through a federal permitting process. That system, created decades ago, is no longer keeping up with today's needs.

Right now, it takes an [average](#) of **5.3 years for a public transportation project** to secure federal permits. **Clean energy projects face** similar challenges, with NEPA environmental reviews taking an **average of 4.5 years**. A recent Berkeley Lab [survey](#) found that roughly **one-third of wind and solar siting applications submitted in the last five years were canceled** — often due to delays, grid access issues, or permitting uncertainty.

These delays raise costs, stall job creation, and leave families and communities waiting for the reliable infrastructure they've been promised. Energy bills go up, businesses face growing uncertainty, and needed investments are put on hold.

## Why Reform Is Long Overdue

The last major federal permitting reform happened over 50 years ago — with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), signed into law in 1970.

NEPA requires federal agencies to assess the environmental impacts of their proposed actions before making decisions. These actions can include reviewing energy project permit applications, managing federal lands, and building highways and public infrastructure.

Through the NEPA process, agencies study the environmental, social, and economic effects of projects — and they invite public input before moving forward.

While NEPA plays an important role in environmental protection, it was created for a different era. The process has become slower, more complex, and increasingly vulnerable to legal delays. What once took months can now take years, delaying the very projects that support affordable, reliable, and cleaner energy.

Permitting reform doesn't weaken NEPA — it updates the system to work better for today's needs, while maintaining strong environmental oversight.

## Smart Energy Solutions: What to Ask Lawmakers

When speaking with your elected officials, keep your message simple and focused. These practical reforms can help reduce costs, improve reliability, and ensure families and businesses get the energy they need without delay.

### Set Clear Timelines for Permits

- Support permitting reforms that set clear, timely standards for affordable, reliable energy projects.
- ☐ The House-passed One Big, Beautiful Bill Act offers a smart [model](#) - requiring eligible projects to start construction within 60 days of enactment and be online by 2029 to receive full tax credits. These practical timelines help move key technologies like natural gas, nuclear, carbon capture, and transmission forward faster.

[Click here to learn more about the One Big, Beautiful Bill Act.](#)

### Advance Fuel Choice

- Urge support for permitting reforms that support affordable and reliable energy sources, like those included in the One Big, Beautiful Bill Act
- ☐ We need permanent power sources like natural gas and nuclear, coupled with additional support for critical technologies, such as carbon capture and transmission lines, to meet growing electricity demand. A fair, commonsense approach ensures every viable solution can help lower prices and improve reliability.

### Eliminate Redundant Reviews

- Ask lawmakers to eliminate duplicative or conflicting agency reviews.
- ☐ Projects often face overlapping requirements from multiple departments - slowing progress without improving safety or outcomes. Agencies should be allowed to review projects concurrently, not in sequence.

### Limit Lawsuits That Stall Projects

- Support limits on unnecessary lawsuits that delay already-approved projects.
- ☐ Legal challenges are important for accountability, but once a project has cleared regulatory review, it shouldn't be tied up in years of litigation. Commonsense limits can keep the process fair and focused.



## What Are Transmission Lines?

A transmission line is a high-voltage power line that carries electricity over long distances — typically from where it's generated, like at a power plant, to local substations closer to communities. At the substation, the electricity is "stepped down" to lower voltages and then sent through smaller distribution lines that deliver it safely to homes, schools, and businesses. Without transmission lines, we couldn't reliably power our daily lives — especially as more electricity comes from sources located far from cities, like wind or solar farms.

# Make Your Voice Count

If you're attending a public meeting or submitting written comments on an energy issue, use this sample as a guide. Feel free to personalize it with your own story, but keep it short, respectful, and focused on what reliable, affordable energy means for you and your community.



## SAMPLE PUBLIC COMMENT LETTER

Dear [Senator/Representative] [Last Name],

My name is [Your Name], and I'm writing to ask you to support common-sense permitting reform that protects families, strengthens our energy system, and helps move reliable and affordable projects forward.

Right now, too many critical infrastructure projects - including natural gas, transmission lines, roads, bridges, and clean energy infrastructure - are stuck in years of delays because of outdated approval processes. That drives up energy costs, slows innovation, and puts added pressure on the power grid at a time when we're using more electricity than ever.

I support faster, more efficient permitting that:

- Sets clear timelines for decisions,
- Reduces duplication and red tape across agencies,
- Applies fairly to all energy sources, and
- Still maintains strong environmental protections.

Families like mine depend on affordable, reliable power to power our homes, run our businesses, and support our communities. Permitting reform is a critical step to make sure that energy is available when we need it without unnecessary delays or rising costs.

Please support smart permitting reform that balances speed, safety, and accountability. Our energy future depends on it.

## Why This Matters – Talking Points to Share

- Energy projects take too long to get approved, and that delays lower costs and reliable service for families.
- We need fair, efficient permitting that supports permanent power sources like natural gas and nuclear, innovative technologies like carbon capture and storage, and increases the build-out of critical infrastructure.
- Outdated rules and red tape are raising energy bills and slowing down solutions we all need.
- Smarter permitting doesn't mean weaker environmental standards, it means faster, clearer decisions with strong oversight.
- Faster project approvals mean more jobs, cleaner energy, and a stronger electricity grid for everyone.

## The Bottom Line

Outdated permitting rules are slowing down the energy solutions we need, from power lines and pipelines to cleaner technologies like hydrogen, nuclear, and carbon capture. These delays drive up costs, weaken power reliability, and make it harder to meet growing energy demand.

The result? Higher bills for families. Missed opportunities for new jobs. And communities left waiting for the reliable, affordable energy they've been promised. Permitting reform is not about cutting corners - it's about cutting red tape.

We need a system that works smarter, moves faster, and delivers results without sacrificing environmental protections.

Contact your representatives today. Ask them to support commonsense permitting reform that keeps costs down, strengthens the grid, and puts families first.

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[CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVE](#)