

# Permitting Delays Are Driving Up Your Energy Costs – Here's How to Fix It

Every time a new energy project is delayed – whether it's a transmission line, pipeline, or clean energy installation – the cost shows up on your utility bill.

At the center of those delays is a federal law passed more than 50 years ago: the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). It was created to make sure energy and infrastructure projects consider environmental impacts. That goal still matters. But the process has become so outdated and over-complicated that it's hurting families and businesses.

## NEPA Delays Drive Up Costs and Slow Progress

The NEPA permitting process isn't just slow — it's expensive, unpredictable, and often has a direct impact on energy prices, reliability, and the ability to get projects built on time.

- **Environmental reviews take years.** On average, a NEPA Environmental Impact Statement is 661 pages long and takes 4.5 years to complete.
- **Legal challenges add even more delay.** NEPA lawsuits can add another 4.2 years on top of that. Since 2013, NEPA-related court cases are up 56% — and many are based on paperwork issues, not real environmental concerns.
- **Every delay comes with a price tag.** The average added cost due to permitting delays is \$4.2 million per project. Those costs don't just hit developers — they get passed along to consumers through higher electric bills, gas prices, and project cancellations.

**The bottom line: delays are expensive, and working families are the ones footing the bill.**



**661 PAGES**  
**4.5 YEARS**

That's The Average  
Length & Time It Takes  
To Complete A NEPA  
Environmental Impact  
Statement

## Too Many Projects Die in Permitting Purgatory



Developers Must Spend

**\$25–50  
MILLION**

Just To Navigate  
Permitting — With No  
Guarantee The Project  
Survives

NEPA was supposed to help guide responsible development — but today, it often creates a system where no one can say yes, and nothing gets built.

**Experts have called NEPA a “blueprint for paralysis.”** At a recent congressional hearing, witnesses described it as a process where “no one is empowered or protected enough to say yes.”

**Developers must spend \$25-50 million just to navigate the permitting process** — often with no guarantee their project will survive.

**Many projects stall out before a public notice is even issued.** That means communities lose out on construction jobs, grid upgrades, and new sources of affordable energy — before they even know a project existed.

**When nothing gets built, the cost isn't just paperwork – it's lost opportunity, wasted investment, and higher prices for families and businesses left waiting.**

## Let Your Voice Be Heard

You don't have to be an expert to make an impact — just stay informed and speak up. Start by signing up for updates from your state's utility commission or energy department so you don't miss notices about projects or hearings.



### YOU DON'T NEED TO BE AN EXPERT TO MAKE CHANGE

Just Informed, Engaged, &  
Willing To Speak Up

Most agencies accept written input online, and many now offer virtual meetings. When you comment, keep it clear and personal — focus on how delays or high costs impact your life or your community.

Finally, reach out to local officials. Let them know that fixing the permitting process matters and that smarter, faster energy approvals are a priority for the people they represent.



### SAMPLE PUBLIC COMMENT LETTER

Good [morning/afternoon], and thank you for the opportunity to comment.

My name is [Your Name], and I live in [Your Community]. I'm writing to support smart reforms to the NEPA permitting process.

Right now, it takes far too long to get energy projects approved. These delays raise costs, reduce reliability, and make it harder for families like mine to afford basic energy needs. We need clear timelines, better coordination across agencies, and a process that supports public input without unnecessary red tape.

Please support common-sense changes that keep protections in place but allow energy projects to move forward faster and more fairly.

## Why This Matters – Talking Points to Share

When you're speaking at a public meeting, talking with a local official, or writing to a state representative, you don't need to be an energy expert. You just need to speak clearly about why public involvement matters. Here are a few points you can use or adapt:

- Permitting **delays drive up energy bills** for families and small businesses. The longer projects take to get approved, the more they cost — and those costs end up in monthly utility bills.
- It shouldn't take nearly a decade to approve a power line or cleaner energy project. Energy demand is rising fast. **Reviews need to move faster – without sacrificing safety.**
- **NEPA delays hurt all energy sources** — natural gas, wind, solar, nuclear, and more. The process is outdated and blocks progress, no matter where the energy comes from.
- AI data centers already use 3–4% of all U.S. electricity — and demand is expected to triple by 2030. That means **we need more power, faster. Not in 10 years. Not after litigation. Now.**
- **Projects are dying before they start.** Developers are forced to spend \$25–50 million just to survive the NEPA process. Many can't — and walk away before the public even hears about the project.

[\*\*CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVE\*\*](#)