



## FEDERAL PERMITTING REFORM AND JOBS ACT (S. 2324)

The **Federal Permitting Reform and Jobs Act** aims to create a more efficient project review process, spur economic development, and create good-paying jobs.

### SUMMARY

The Federal Permitting Reform and Jobs Act modernizes the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to expedite infrastructure projects while still maintaining rigorous environmental scrutiny. The NEPA process has slowed the most impactful and important infrastructure projects, and delays to projects means delays to the environmental and economic benefits that could improve Americans' quality of life. Modernizing NEPA is essential if we are to transition to a clean energy economy, and we can only build new clean energy projects and reduce carbon dioxide emissions as fast as we can permit new projects. The Federal Permitting Reform and Jobs Act will cut through the unnecessary red tape that stymies infrastructure and provide more certainty for the permits needed to break ground on exciting new clean energy projects.

### HISTORY:

Often called the “Magna Carta” of environmental laws, NEPA was signed into law by President Nixon in 1970 and was one of the first laws ever written to establish a broad national framework for environmental protection. NEPA’s purpose is to ensure that Federal agencies consider the environmental, social, and economic impacts of proposed projects, and inform and involve the public in the decision making process. Unfortunately, the simple process envisioned in 1970 looks nothing like the process today. Since its inception more than 50 years ago, the NEPA process has become costly and ineffective, slowing down progress and becoming a tool to delay or kill energy projects. It has resulted in a federal permitting process that can take a project as long as 5 to 10 years to complete and cost millions of dollars. Making the permitting process more efficient is essential for two reasons: one, stewardship of taxpayer resources, and two, scaling clean energy rapidly.

In 2015, Senator Rob Portman and then-Senator Claire McCaskill co-authored the Federal Permitting Improvement Act, which was enacted as Title 41 of the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The FAST Act, also known as FAST-41, aimed to streamline the environmental review and authorization process for large, complex infrastructure projects and created the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council to create a one-stop-shop for coordinating permitting activities as well as an online permitting dashboard to improve transparency for stakeholders.

### SPECIFICS:

The Federal Permitting Reform and Jobs Act builds on the progress made by FAST-41 and aims to make project reviews more efficient by:

- Making FAST-41 permanent
- Expanding FAST-41 eligibility to projects sponsored by Indian Tribes, Alaska Native Corporations, and Native Hawaiian Organizations
- Establishing a two-year target for permitting projects
- Encouraging agencies to use one environmental impact statement document for permitting decisions
- Improving the day-to-day operations of the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council.

**ORIGINAL SPONSORS:** Senator Rob Portman (R-OH)

**COSPONSORS:** Senator Dan Sullivan (R-AK), Senator Joseph Manchin (D-WV), Senator Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ)

**SUPPORT:** BPC Action, Business Roundtable CEOs, Center for Funding America's Future, Citizens for Responsible Energy Solutions, ClearPath Action, Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, Former Senator Claire McCaskill (co-author of Fast-41), Leeward Renewable Energy, National Mining Association, Native American Advancement & Tribal Engagement, North America's Building Trades Unions, Ørsted North America, Permitting Institute, Progressive Policy Institute, U.S. Chamber of Commerce

**CONGRESS.GOV LINK:** [S. 2324](#)