September 12, 2022

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader Hoyer:

The permitting and public notice and comment provisions mandated by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) are among the only tools local communities have to force careful review of federal projects that may have serious, long-term, environmental, and public health consequences in those communities. Congress should continue to provide increased funding to assist federal agencies in completing the NEPA process but attempts to short-circuit or undermine the law in the name of “reform” must be opposed.

According to media reports, there is agreement to advance a series of anti-environmental and anti-environmental justice provisions through the House, at the behest of the American Petroleum Institute (API). These destructive provisions will allow polluting manufacturing and energy development projects to be rushed through before the families who are forced to live near them are even aware of the plans.

The proposed legislation would restrict public access to the courts to seek remedies against illegal project development; place arbitrary limits on the amount of time the public is given to comment on polluting projects; and curtail public input, environmental review, and government accountability. Additionally, the API plan would require a certain number of harmful fossil fuel projects to be designated as “projects of strategic national importance” to receive priority federal support, assistance, and expedited environmental review. These permitting “reforms” would weaken other important public health protections, including the Clean Water Act and more.

We remain deeply concerned that these serious and detrimental permitting provisions will significantly and disproportionately impact low-income communities, indigenous communities, and communities of color. The inclusion of these provisions in a continuing resolution, or any other must-pass legislation, would silence the voices of frontline and environmental justice communities by insulating them from scrutiny. Such a move would force Members to choose between protecting EJ communities from further pollution or funding the government.

We urge you to ensure that these provisions are kept out of a continuing resolution or any other must-pass legislation this year.

http://naturalresources.house.gov
Sincerely,

Raúl M. Grijalva
Chair
House Committee on Natural Resources

Jared Huffman
Chair
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife

Alan Lowenthal
Chair
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources

Joe Neguse
Chair
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands

Katie Porter
Chair
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress

Ed Case
Member of Congress

Nydia Velázquez
Member of Congress

Grace Napolitano
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

Melanie A. Stansbury
Member of Congress

Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress
Darren Soto
Member of Congress

Michael F. O. San Nicolas
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

Mark Takano
Member of Congress

/s/ Robert C. “Bobby” Scott
Member of Congress

John Yarmuth
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
Member of Congress

Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Maxine Waters
Member of Congress

Adam Smith
Member of Congress

Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

Gerald “Jerry” McNerney
Member of Congress
Grace Meng  
Member of Congress

Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress

Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress

Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
Member of Congress

Nanette Díaz Barragán  
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress

Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress

Madeleine Dean  
Member of Congress

Alma Adams  
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress

Lucille Roybal-Allard  
Member of Congress

Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress
Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

/s/ André Carson
Member of Congress

/s/ John Sarbanes
Member of Congress

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress

Abigail Spanberger
Member of Congress

David Trone
Member of Congress