



March 29, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steve Scalise  
Majority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker McCarthy and Majority Leader Scalise,

On behalf of the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) – the business association of the nation’s engineering industry – we wish to express our strong support for H.R. 1, the *Lower Energy Costs Act*. This important legislation includes a number of provisions that will put America’s engineering companies to work helping to deliver clean, reliable, and sustainable American energy.

ACEC member firms have a strong commitment to global sustainability, competitiveness, and security, including advancement of the nation’s critical infrastructure. Federal infrastructure programs, including the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), provide the funding to create truly transformative infrastructure projects that will benefit the nation for generations to come. A key ingredient to the success of these initiatives will be efficient and responsible environmental review and permitting policies that facilitate the delivery of critical infrastructure while ensuring environmental protections and opportunities for local community engagement.

H.R. 1 includes needed reforms that are consistent with this key objective. We are particularly supportive of language that directs CEQ to study and report the potential to create an online unified permitting portal allowing applicants to submit required documents and track application progress and enhancing agency coordination by centralizing data and streamlining communications among agencies and the applicant.

The bill includes other key provisions to modernize the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), including the establishment of reasonable filing deadlines of one year for environmental assessments (EA) and two years for environmental impact statements (EIS), identifying certain activities that are not major federal actions requiring NEPA review, limitations on scopes of review to “reasonably foreseeable” and “economically feasible” impacts, the consideration of a reasonable number and range of alternatives, and allowing project sponsors to prepare EAs and EISs on request.

The reforms in H.R.1 represent an important step towards a more technologically advanced, thorough, time-saving, transparent, and accountable permitting process allowing more effective allocation of limited human and financial resources. Importantly, energy market innovation will be resuscitated, supply chains strengthened, and the competitiveness of the future American economy will be far brighter.

We greatly appreciate your leadership to advance critical infrastructure and modernize outdated federal environmental review and permitting standards. We stand ready for continuing collaboration on 21<sup>st</sup> Century solutions that enable our economy to flourish with innovative, clean, reliable, and affordable energy, water, transportation, and other critical infrastructure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Linda Bauer Darr". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "L".

Linda Bauer Darr  
President & CEO