



January 7, 2026

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair, Committee on Environment
& Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chair, Committee on Energy & Natural
Resources
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
Ranking Member, Committee on
Environment & Public Works
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member, Committee on
Energy & Natural Resources
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Capito, Chair Lee, Senator Whitehouse, and Senator Heinrich:

I write on behalf of the 3,000 specialty construction contractor employers of the Mechanical Contractors Association of America (MCAA) regarding your respective Committees' consideration of legislation to revise and streamline federal permitting processes, and to advise you of our views and priorities on this important topic. The MCAA has local affiliates in every state across the country. MCAA members deliver top-quality, high-tech services on mechanical system, plumbing, piping, HVAC, and refrigerant system projects for public and private sector clients building all manner of infrastructure and energy projects, including data centers, commercial buildings, pharmaceutical facilities, nuclear plants, and other energy facilities.

As an organization representing contractors of all sizes, and in all areas of the United States, we know the importance of ensuring projects are completed on time and on budget. These are things we can control, and MCAA members add value by using their project management expertise to ensure client projects get the right staff and materials. What we cannot control is when planned projects will actually be allowed to break ground, and we have seen far too many instances where projects are delayed for years or cancelled outright due to the complex and often redundant requirements for multiple administrative and legal reviews to obtain the necessary approvals. These existing processes impact our nation's ability to realize energy independence, to deploy new technologies, and to reshore manufacturing. They also harm MCAA members who see projects disappear and capital evaporate as the environmental review process extends beyond the planned timeline of owners and investors. And they harm communities through lost job opportunities and lost investments in local economies. That is why MCAA was proud to endorse and actively advocate for House passage of the "Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act" to clarify agencies' procedural requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).



We are greatly encouraged by the bipartisan and bicameral interest in enacting changes to federal permitting requirements, and MCAA acknowledges that some progress has been made in recent years. In 2023, Congress passed the *Fiscal Responsibility Act* with language to clarify the scope, level, and timelines of NEPA reviews. The Supreme Court's unanimous decision last year in *Seven County Infrastructure* further clarified that while NEPA reviews must consider both the direct and indirect environmental effects of proposed projects, they do not have to consider the effects of ancillary or unrelated activities. Federal agencies have also been working to reform federal permitting processes as they implement President Trump's executive orders on energy independence, artificial intelligence, and related NEPA review directives. While these efforts have helped, more must be done. Additional congressional action is required if we are to ensure our nation can timely deploy 21st century technologies and infrastructure required to reshore American manufacturing.

As your Committees consider additional federal permitting reforms this year, we ask that you carefully consider the need to harmonize agencies' procedural requirements and further clarify the scope of environmental reviews consistent with the *Seven County Infrastructure* decision, establish shorter, more appropriate timelines for judicial review of agency decisions, and expand agencies' authority to use categorical exclusions whenever practical and feasible. These are core components of the House-passed, MCAA-supported SPEED Act. The MCAA also urges the Committees to address any statutory barriers to fully implementing the President's executive orders related to permitting reform. This includes President Trump's executive orders to expand domestic infrastructure and expedite American energy development, particularly as it relates to nuclear, natural gas, and geothermal energy projects. It also includes reforming the permitting process to support implementation of the President's July 23, 2025, Executive Order 14318 "Accelerating Federal Permitting of Data Center Infrastructure." Clearly defined, timely review procedures under NEPA, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and related statutes that do not lead to years of litigation are essential to ensuring the U.S. remains the leader in artificial intelligence by building out data centers nationwide and related energy generation.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our views on these matters. The MCAA stands ready to work with the Committees to enact meaningful, comprehensive, and permanent permitting reforms that will protect America's natural resources while also facilitating economic growth, technological modernization, energy independence, and the reshoring of manufacturing to America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy J. Brink", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Timothy J. Brink
CEO
Mechanical Contractors Association of America