

Proposed Interim Policy Resolution on Permitting Reform Policy

Issue: The federal permitting process often neglects the county perspective. Consultation with local governments is often a formality at the end of the permitting process rather than a collaborative effort throughout. As lawmakers consider legislation to reform the federal permitting process in the 119th Congress, county governments should consistently have a seat at the table.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to pass legislation to reform the federal permitting process that limits federal preemption of local authority and requires meaningful consultation and updates with local governments at the beginning and throughout the development of critical infrastructure projects such as transportation, energy, broadband deployment, air quality and water quality that require a federal permit.

Background: During the 118th Congress, energy permitting reform garnered significant interest culminating in the favorable reporting of the bipartisan Energy Permitting Reform Act out of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources in July 2024. However, no permitting reform provisions were included in the end of year funding legislation due to disagreements among Congressional leadership. Since taking office, President Trump has issued multiple executive orders that address permitting reform, but more details are needed on the role of county governments in expedited permitting processes in this new Administration.

Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact: Reforming the federal permitting process would allow projects to be completed without delays that increase overall costs.

Sponsor(s): Rosemarie Smallcombe, Supervisor, Mariposa County, Calif.; Randall Ryt, Councilor, Los Alamos County, N.M.; Sheryl Graham, Senior Director of Human Services, Monroe County, Fla.