

Reform Legislation Will Prevent Pipeline Permitting Abuse by States

Legislation will make it harder for states to slow or stop pipeline projects by abusing the water quality permitting process

Washington, DC – The Energy Builders coalition on Tuesday announced its support for legislation just introduced in the U. S. Senate that will make it harder for states to abuse the water quality permitting process to slow or stop pipeline projects based on unrelated political or ideological grounds.

The Water Quality Certification Improvement Act of 2018 clarifies the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to ensure that state water quality permitting reviews of a proposed project are limited to direct water quality impacts of that project, and that decisions to grant or deny a permit must be made based on water quality reasons only.

The measure was introduced by four energy state Senators led by John Barrasso (R-WY), chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, along with Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Jim Inhofe (R-OK), and Steve Daines (R-MT). In a Committee release, Senator Inhofe said “States hostile to fossil fuels have been taking advantage of loopholes in the Clean Water Act 401 certification process to block projects they simply don’t like, circumventing the needs and interests of other states and communities. There is no better example of that than how the Northeast corridor is forced to import LNG from Russia because they lack the pipeline infrastructure to transport natural gas produced in America.”

Committee Chairman Barrasso added, “The water quality certification process is being abused by a few states in order to delay important projects. The state of New York has taken similar steps to slow the construction of natural gas pipelines. This kind of obstruction is about politics, not water quality. This legislation returns the process to what it was originally designed for – protecting America’s water.”

Toby Mack, President of the Energy Equipment and Infrastructure Alliance, announced that EEIA and its Energy Builders coalition have made passage of the bill a top legislative priority for the current session of Congress. In announcing EEIA’s support, Mack stated that “America’s energy infrastructure workers and the businesses that build and support pipeline projects have too often seen their jobs and investments threatened by states whose leaders are simply opposed to building needed energy infrastructure. These projects must be built to deliver reliable and affordable energy to their own citizens and those in surrounding states that would be served by proposed pipelines.”

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EEIA’s [Energy Builders](#) coalition consists of companies and trade organizations of businesses and workers that build and provide equipment, supplies and services for pipeline projects.