

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

R. BRUCE JOSTEN
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

1615 H STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20062-2000
202/463-5310

July 30, 2013

The Honorable Rob Portman
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Claire McCaskill
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Portman and McCaskill:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses and organizations of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations, and dedicated to promoting, protecting, and defending America's free enterprise system, strongly supports the "Federal Permitting Improvement Act of 2013." The Federal Permitting Improvement Act of 2013 would provide a streamlined process for developers to obtain environmental permits and approvals for their projects in a timely and efficient manner, allowing jobs to be created and the economy to grow.

Every year that major projects are stalled or cancelled because of a dysfunctional permitting process and a system that allows limitless challenges by opponents of development, millions of jobs are not created. For example, 351 stalled energy projects reviewed in one 2010 study had a total economic value of over \$1 trillion and represented 1.9 million American jobs that were not created.

The Federal Permitting Improvement Act of 2013 would improve the environmental review and permitting process by:

- Coordinating responsibilities among multiple agencies involved in environmental reviews to ensure that "the trains run on time";
- Providing for concurrent reviews by agencies, rather than serial reviews;
- Allowing state-level environmental reviews to be used where the state has done a competent job, thereby avoiding needless duplication of state work by federal reviewers;
- Requiring that agencies involve themselves in the process early and comment early, avoiding eleventh-hour objections that can restart the entire review timetable;

- Establishing a reasonable process for determining the scope of project alternatives, so that the environmental review does not devolve into an endless quest to evaluate infeasible alternatives; and
- Reducing the statute of limitations to challenge an environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act from six years to 150 days.

The Federal Permitting Improvement Act of 2013 is a practical, industry-wide approach that builds on successful provisions for environmental review management found in the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), and Section 1609 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The Federal Permitting Improvement Act of 2013 also embodies the procedural improvements to the environmental review process repeatedly called for by the Obama administration.

The Federal Permitting Improvement Act of 2013 would address the problem that far too many shovel-ready projects face today: lengthy project delays from endless environmental reviews and challenges result in lost opportunities to create jobs and grow the economy. Every year of delay results in millions of jobs not created. The creation of millions of jobs is worth ensuring that our government works faster and more efficiently.

The Chamber strongly supports the Federal Permitting Improvement Act of 2013 and stands ready to work with you to improve the environmental review and permitting process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Bruce Josten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "B".

R. Bruce Josten