

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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TO THE MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses 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 H.R. 1900, the "Natural Gas Pipeline Permitting and Reform Act," which would serve as an important tool to ensure that adequate natural gas pipeline capacity is available to support continued economic growth and the domestic manufacturing renaissance.

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPAAct 2005) granted to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) the authority to establish a schedule for other federal agencies to issue the permits necessary to site new natural gas pipelines. Unfortunately, EPAAct 2005 does not provide FERC with the ability to enforce its decisional deadlines set forth with respect to applications to site new natural gas pipeline infrastructure. Therefore, the timelines established by FERC have not, in practice, facilitated timely decisions on new natural gas pipeline permits.

The Natural Gas Pipeline Permitting Reform Act would cure key shortcomings of EPAAct 2005 by codifying FERC's authority to enforce natural gas pipeline permit deadlines. Specifically, H.R. 1900 would establish a ninety-day review period for affected reviewing agencies, with the potential for a thirty-day extension of that time period. This reasonable timeframe would commence upon FERC's completion of its review—and issuance of the associated environmental impact statement or assessment—pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. In the event that a reviewing agency fails to take action on a permit request within the review period, the permit would be deemed approved, while still allowing such reviewing agency to proffer conditions to the permit within thirty days of such approval. Consistent with the Congressional intent of EPAAct 2005, H.R. 1900 would ensure that natural gas pipeline permitting decisions are made in a timely manner.

The abundant natural gas resources that are now accessible through advanced exploration and technology have positively transformed the global energy posture of America, while driving a gradual economic recovery at both the national and local levels. The timely permitting and construction of new natural gas pipeline capacity is essential to spur economic development and maintain the reliability of an electric power grid that is becoming increasingly dependent upon natural gas as a fuel source. The Natural Gas Pipeline Permitting Reform Act is therefore not merely an infrastructure bill, but also an economic development and energy security bill.

The Chamber strongly supports H.R. 1900, the "Natural Gas Pipeline Permitting Reform Act." **The Chamber strongly urges you to vote in favor of H.R. 1900 and may include votes on, or in relation to, H.R. 1900 in our annual *How They Voted* scorecard.**

Sincerely,



R. Bruce Josten