



Enact Transmission Permitting Reform

Background:

In addition to passage of the NECA-supported H.R. 1, *the Energy Security Act*, Congress enacted some reforms attached to the *Fiscal Responsibility Act*, including codifying 'One-Federal Decision', creating page limits for key documents, the creation of E-NEPA, and adding categorical exemptions. While these reforms were a good step, a critical piece, transmission, was missing.

Transmission capacity is the key factor of allowing energy projects to connect to the grid. Permitting hurdles and the lack of transmission buildout have prevented completed energy projects from connecting to the grid or halted projects from completion altogether. Congress must pass transmission permitting reform.

Key Points of H.R. 4689:

- *Approval Timelines Remain Lengthy for Transmission Work.* Currently, it can take a decade or more to build new high-voltage, interregional transmission lines. Fragmented state, local, and federal jurisdiction over transmission siting, lack of coordination and communication between cooperating agencies, inadequate staff resources, failure to secure buy-in from local community stakeholders, and incomplete applications are among the top factors slowing down inter-regional transmission development. This legislation would ensure that the time from the pre-filing process to the notice of permit should not exceed three years.
- *There is Dire Need for Additional, Strategically Placed Transmission Deployment.* Additional electric transmission infrastructure is needed in nearly all regions of the country to improve reliability and resilience, address high energy costs, and reduce congestion and constraints. Regions with historically high levels of within-region congestion — the Northwest, Mountain, Texas, and New York regions in particular — as well as regions with unscheduled flows that pose reliability risks — California, Northwest, Mountain, and Southwest regions — are greatly affected. This legislation would expand national interest electric transmission facilities to an already deemed corridor or ensure that an electric transmission facility that has a transmission capacity of not less than 345 kilovolts; or 750 megawatts; is located in no fewer than 2 States.
- *Improve the Siting Process.* This bill substantially reforms the role of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in the transmission process by allowing the Secretary of Energy, at FERC's request, to designate electricity transmission projects as "national interest". This would smooth the process of constructing long-range, inter-regional high voltage transmission lines.

NECA Asks:

- Cosponsor H.R. 4689, the FASTER Act