



January 15, 2015

The Honorable Mike Pompeo  
436 Cannon House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Pompeo,

The Distribution Contractors Association (DCA) represents contractors, suppliers and manufacturers who provide construction services including installation, replacement and rehabilitation of natural gas pipelines. DCA strongly supports the Natural Gas Pipeline Permitting Reform Act (HR 161), which would create clear deadlines for both the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the many federal agencies involved in approving interstate natural gas pipeline projects. We thank you for reintroducing this important legislation and look forward to helping see it enacted into law in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Pipeline projects create high-paying jobs, generate significant economic activity and expand the tax base in local communities. Hundreds of thousands of workers are employed to explore, produce, transport and distribute natural gas, and industry studies show that every \$1 billion invested in underground infrastructure creates up to between 25,000 and 30,000 jobs and increases demand for products and services in other industries.

According to a 2014 report by the INGAA Foundation, approximately 850 miles in new gas transmission pipelines and over 800 miles of new laterals to/from power plants, processing facilities, and storage fields will be needed every year from 2011 and 2035. Mainline transmission systems bring natural gas to needy distribution markets in New England and other frosty areas of the country that already face capacity issues with regard to pipeline transportation.

The current permitting process exacerbates this situation. Key pipeline projects are often stalled because of delays in acquiring federal and state permits and rights-of-way approvals from various regulatory agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These delays increase costs and lead to missed in-service dates and displacement of workers, neglecting the strong economic benefits that come with pipeline construction projects.

The legislation would require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to approve or deny a pipeline permit no later than 12 months after receiving an application and require federal agencies to consider the application within 90 days after FERC's review, allowing for a 30-day extension for unanticipated circumstances. It is important to recognize that the time allowed for action by other permitting agencies provided in the legislation would not begin until FERC has completed all environmental reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Your bill effectively empowers FERC to enforce permitting deadlines subject to other federal and state agencies, and we look forward to helping see it enacted into law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "RD", is written over a horizontal line.

Robert Darden  
Executive Vice President

Cc: House Committee on Energy and Commerce