



January 16, 2015

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

Dear Representative Pompeo:

On behalf of the members of the National Taxpayers Union (NTU), I write in support of H.R. 161, your Natural Gas Pipeline Permitting Reform Act. This legislation would accelerate the federal review process for natural gas pipeline permit applications. Streamlining the permitting process for natural gas pipelines and codifying commonsense deadlines will help reduce unnecessary regulatory hurdles that cause too many critical projects to languish.

A Government Accountability Office (GAO) report from February 2013 found that the many stages and steps of the permitting process that often vary from state to state can hinder meritorious projects. The GAO explains that “for those projects that were approved from January 2010 to January 2012, the average time from pre-filing to certification was 558 days...” As natural gas exploration booms around the country, moving that resource from one point to another is a crucial component to the growth and sustainability of the industry.

From a consumer perspective, expediting the pipeline approval process means greater availability of an increasingly abundant and relatively low-cost energy source. Limited pipeline capacity can be a major problem for parts of the country, such as New England where customers are often subjected to natural gas shortages and price spikes during periods of peak demand.

Giant infrastructure projects, such as natural gas pipelines, require massive investments of capital and planning – two things, that in turn, require a transparent, predictable, and consistent regulatory environment in order to ensure those investments pay off. The new deadlines laid out in H.R. 161 would convey a greater degree of certainty in a growing market and reduce the capability of the federal government to unduly limit the potential of this important industry.

NTU is pleased to endorse the Natural Gas Permitting Process Reform Act; our members urge all Representatives to co-sponsor this legislation and work toward its enactment.

Sincerely,

Nan Swift  
Federal Affairs Manager