

AMIGOS BRAVOS ♦ BADLANDS CONSERVATION ALLIANCE ♦ BIRD ALLIANCE OF OREGON ♦ CASCADIA WILDLANDS ♦ CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY ♦ CITIZENS FOR A HEALTHY COMMUNITY ♦ CLIMATE JUSTICE ALLIANCE ♦ COALITION FOR CLEAN AFFORDABLE ENERGY ♦ COLUMBIA RIVERKEEPER ♦ COOK INLETKEEPER ♦ DEVIL'S SPRING RANCH ♦ DINÉ CARE ♦ DOUGLAS COUNTY GLOBAL WARMING COALITION ♦ EARTHWORKS ♦ ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION INFORMATION CENTER ♦ FAMILIES FOR A LIVABLE CLIMATE ♦ FRIENDS OF THE EARTH ♦ FRIENDS OF THE INYO ♦ FRIENDS OF THE SHASTA RIVER ♦ FRIENDS OF THE WILD SWAN ♦ GALLATIN WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION ♦ GILA RESOURCES INFORMATION PROJECT ♦ GREAT BASIN WATER NETWORK ♦ GREEN LATINOS ♦ GREEN LATINOS NEW MEXICO ♦ HEALTHY CLIMATE NEW MEXICO ♦ HIGH COUNTRY CONSERVATION ADVOCATES ♦ KLAMATH-SISKIYOU WILANDS COUNCIL ♦ LOS PADRES FORESTWATCH ♦ MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION CENTER ♦ MONTANA HEALTH PROFESSIONALS FOR A HEALTHY CLIMATE ♦ MOUNT SHASTA BIOREGIONAL ECOLOGY CENTER ♦ NAEVA ♦ NEW MEXICO ACEQUIA ASSOCIATION ♦ NEW MEXICO INTERFAITH POWER AND LIGHT ♦ NEW MEXICO VOICES FOR CHILDREN ♦ NEW MEXICO WILD ♦ NM CAFé – COMMUNITIES EN ACCIÓN Y DE FE ♦ NM NATIVE VOTE ♦ NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL ♦ NORTHEAST OREGON ECOSYSTEMS ♦ NORTHWEST ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATES ♦ NUESTRA TIERRA CONSERVATION PROJECT ♦ OLYMPIC PARK ADVOCATES ♦ ORANGE COUNTY COASTKEEPER ♦ OREGON WILD ♦ PARK COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL ♦ PARTNERSHIP FOR EARTH SPIRITUALITY ♦ PEOPLE AND POLLINATORS ACTION NETWORK ♦ ROGUE RIVERKEEPER ♦ SAN JUAN CITIZENS ALLIANCE ♦ SAN LUIS VALLEY ECOSYSTEM COUNCIL ♦ SIERRA CLUB – MONTANA CHAPTER ♦ SODA MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS COUNCIL ♦ SOUTHEAST ALASKA CONSERVATION COUNCIL ♦ SPOKANE RIVERKEEPER ♦ THE GLOBAL WARMING EXPRESS ♦ TRI-VALLEY COMMUNITIES AGAINST A RADIOACTIVE ENVIRONMENT – CAREs ♦ TUALATIN RIVERKEEPERS ♦ UMPQUA NATURAL LEADERSHIP SCIENCE HUB ♦ UMPQUA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY ♦ UMPQUA WATERSHEDS ♦ WATER POLICY PATHWAYS ♦ WESTERN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CENTER ♦ WESTERN ORGANIZATION OF RESOURCE COUNCILS ♦ WESTERN SLOPE CONSERVATION CENTER ♦ WESTERN WATERSHEDS PROJECT ♦ WHITE MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE ♦ WILD CONNECTIONS ♦ WILDEARTH GUARDIANS ♦ WILDERNESS WORKSHOP ♦ WILLAMETTE RIVERKEEPER ♦ WYOMING WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

April 16, 2026

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Minority Leader

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
Ranking Member
Environment & Public Works Committee

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Energy & Natural Resources Committee

Dear Members of Congress:

The 73 undersigned organizations and their more than 2.6 million members and supporters represent climate, community, conservation, faith, and Indigenous interests from across the country with a deep connection to the western U.S. For many of us, this region is our home, some since time immemorial.

We write in strong opposition to congressional permitting reform legislation. We urge you to reject permitting reform in this Congress for what it is: a reactive capitulation to energy and technology industry demands and the Trump administration's deliberately engineered regulatory chaos. There is simply no precedent for what this administration has wrought, and permitting reform proposals under consideration—which scapegoat environmental laws—will only deepen the harm. Below, we offer an alternative path centered on ecological and community considerations.

Our position is predicated on that fact that, given Congress' ideological composition and alignment with the Trump administration's agenda, any permitting legislation that could conceivably emerge from this Congress and be signed into law by the president would unacceptably erode bedrock community and environmental safeguards, exclude the public from federal decision making, and diminish the transparency and accountability now demanded of government agencies by federal law. Such legislation would undercut trust and credibility with the public, inducing a backlash against long-needed green infrastructure development even as it would fail to provide a path through the administration's blockade of renewable energy projects. This is particularly so given the beneficiaries of permitting reform are industries aligned with the administration's agenda—many of which are building out a plague of fossil fuel-powered AI data centers—or can be forced into submission.

The Trump administration's conduct vividly underscores these risks. In recent weeks, it paid an energy company, TotalEnergies, nearly \$1 billion to surrender offshore wind leases under the condition it redirect that capital to fossil fuel development in the Gulf of Mexico. It then convened the "God Squad," a cabinet-level panel that, under the false pretext of national security and without satisfying legal requirements, exempted oil and gas industry operations in the entire Gulf of Mexico from the Endangered Species Act, condemning imperiled species to a heightened risk of extinction.

The same week the "God Squad" made its decision, the Trump administration initiated a process to overturn Public Land Order 7923, a 2023 decision by then-Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland to protect 336,425 acres of public lands located within 10 miles of Chaco Culture National Historical Park's boundaries from new oil and gas leasing and development—a hard-fought protection for the region's landscape and its communities, in particular Diné and Pueblo. And, just last week, the administration canceled 165,000 acres of emerging national forest and public lands protections to safeguard New Mexico's Upper Pecos River Watershed from new mineral and mining exploitation. Permitting reform legislation would make it far easier to exploit these two beloved regions, risking rushed decisions that would cause grave harm to community and environmental values without full consideration of impacts, action to avoid and minimize harm, or meaningful public involvement—all while compromising the public's access to effective redress through the courts.

As evidenced by the staggering array of deregulatory rescissions that arise across domains—from public lands and wildlife to clean air and water—these actions are not an anomaly but, rather, a confirmation that the administration holds an intransigent hostility to renewables, the environment, and communities that have long suffered from our country's fossil fuel-centered energy policies. None of the legislative concepts under consideration of Congress—including reactive ideas to provide for permitting "certainty" and "parity"—address what is ultimately not a question of law or policy, but an abuse of power.

Congress has not checked this abuse—it has enabled it. Congress used the 2025 Reconciliation Bill to elevate resource extraction over conservation as the *de facto* dominant use of public lands. Other legislation politicizes the protection of imperiled species, seeking to legislatively delist species rather than trust the Endangered Species Act's well-considered directive that expert wildlife agencies make decisions based on the best available science with public involvement. Further, the U.S. House has passed ill-conceived legislation, such as the Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development Act, H.R. 4776, in December 2025 that would, if passed into law, further entrench fossil fuels and compromise environmental and community protections.

The dynamic in the U.S. Senate is not much better. Permitting reform discussions—as evidenced by a hearing held by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee on January 28, 2026—have swept aside ecological and community values and fixated exclusively on energy and technology development interests. Further, the chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Senator Mike Lee (R-UT), has weaponized the Congressional Review Act in an attempt to unravel millions of acres of public lands protections provided by a resource management plan developed after years of public input. This action, coming on the heels of several other Congressional Review Act resolutions eliminating resource management plans, is illustrative of Congress’ intrusion into matters best left to expert agencies with public involvement, not congressional politics. Sen. Lee, notably, has also continued to pursue legislation to sell public lands to private interests.

While legislators may compartmentalize these issues in their minds, the public does not. We see this moment in its brutal, cumulative totality. So too does industry as they profit from the people and places we love. Put simply, Congress, given its composition, is not part of the solution but, rather, actively contributing to the problem. Permitting reform, as now conceived, is a continuation of problematic legislative action that favors energy and technology interests over the public interest and a strategic mistake that would further undermine trust and clarity in U.S. energy, environmental protection, and permitting law and policy.

It is also a fundamental misdiagnosis of the challenges and opportunities presented by the climate crisis and energy transition, scapegoating bedrock environmental laws for permitting delays caused by limited agency capacity, ineffective agency coordination, and industry itself. This misdiagnosis has averted attention from high-value opportunities to: (1) shape energy, technology, and infrastructure development for the better; (2) cultivate a healthy permitting ecosystem centered on well-resourced, mission-driven agencies and upstream planning and oversight; and (3) guide swift and effective downstream permitting—all without compromising public interest safeguards.

Rather than press forward with ill-fated legislation in this fraught moment, we therefore ask that you stand with us in defense of climate action and the public lands, waters and wildlife, and communities of the West. It is this fight—in this moment—that can build shared trust and set the conditions for constructive legislation that strengthens and revitalizes the federal government’s capacity to serve the public interest. This means, to us, the buildout, protection, and restoration of green infrastructure (built or natural) and the full integration of ecological and community considerations into climate and energy policy as a precondition of our ability to thrive in kinship with an abundant world.

We look forward to that opportunity.

Respectfully,



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[signatories on next page]

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