



MARCH 2022

WHO WE ARE

TPI is a non-partisan, non-profit organization focused on simplifying the permitting process so that we can both protect our nation's resources and build the infrastructure critical to American prosperity.

The key is greater coordination and efficiency — not limits on public stakeholder participation or shortcuts to laws and regulations. More comprehensive and lasting permitting reform efforts in the past have been blocked by the notion that “faster!!!” means fewer protections for the environment. When approached thoughtfully— this is simply false.

Success lies in a concerted, cooperative effort for all to come to the table, identify primary causes for concern, and get to work on how best to address those issues, resolve them, and wash, rinse, and repeat as new information identifies new challenges to solve.

Funding is only the first step in delivering the improvements promised in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. To be clear -- to Build Back Better, we must first be able to build."

A VOICE FOR COMMON SENSE PERMITTING

The Permitting Institute (TPI) believes permits and permitting processes should conserve and protect cultural resources, the environment, and species while being more efficient than these processes are today.

We believe the permitting process should be faster than it is today without sacrificing meaningful public engagement or the quality of the decisions made. The costs of delays and indecision are simply too high, undermining new infrastructure initiatives in the Administration, Congress, states, cities, counties, Tribal Nations, and local communities across America.

There is a better way - TPI has been actively monitoring the Federal Register and providing input on proposed rules that will impact the infrastructure permitting process:

[NEPA Implementing Regulations Revisions](#)

“There is significant likelihood of new financial burdens on project proponents derived from theoretical unconstrained expansive analysis on unrelated and economically inviable prospected alternatives. For example, there is no reason a hydropower company should have to pay for the Federal government to identify and analyze a solar project, which has no reasonable likelihood of being built or built in a reasonable period of time, in lieu of a proposed hydropower project, to the same degree of detail as alternatives regarding the siting, design, and operation of the proposed hydropower project, and at the expense of the hydropower company. Instead, CEQ has the opportunity to specify that such unrelated, theoretical alternatives can be captured in the No Action Alternative to address the Federal agency's Purpose and Need for the Federal action.”

[Migratory Bird Permits: Authorizing the Incidental Take of Migratory Birds](#)

“This amount of regulatory whiplash is counterproductive to the critical building, repairing, and investing in American infrastructure being promoted and prioritized by this Administration. Rather than providing additional clarity on recommended or required avoidance, minimization, or mitigation strategies to be used by permitting agencies, these latest changes and introduction of a yet-to-be created permitting program exposes solar, wind, road, rail, port, mine, and bridge developers to MBTA liability. TPI requests that the Service provide an explicit action plan and timeline for the development of any such permitting program, and recommended grandfathering provisions for projects already built, in progress, or entering

the development process until renewable energy targets are met and the critically needed IIJA funds and programs have been disbursed and/or completed.”

[NOI to Amend Land Use Plans Regarding Greater Sage-Grouse \(GRSG\) Conservation](#)

“BLM should consider appropriate land use proposals, particularly for renewable energy development and transmission, and remove the blanket ban for solar as identified in the 2015 RMPAs. BLM needs to be able to incorporate trade-off analyses when evaluating high energy resource locations (including commercial viability) with high quality and/or recoverable GRSG habitat that would best further conservation efforts.”

“Our members are keenly aware that the permitting process must be simplified if we are going to deliver the infrastructure progress America desperately needs. In order to do that, we have to ensure that new rules don’t lead to unintended consequences and complexities.

There must be a balance between progress and protection, and engagement in the rulemaking process is a critical component to improving the federal permitting system.”

- [TPI Senior Vice President Ross Pilotte](#)

IN THE NEWS AND ON THE HILL

[TPI President Alex Herrgott testified before the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis at a hearing titled *Cleaner, Cheaper Energy: Climate Investments to Help Families and Businesses*](#)

"TPI's members and the members of your committee know all too well that funding is only the first step in delivering the improvements promised in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. To be clear -- to Build Back Better, we must first be able to build."

[National Journal: Will environmental permits hold up massive infrastructure push?](#)

-Excerpt from the article by Brian Dabbs-

“That level of uncertainty is happening at the wrong time. Our focus has to be: How do we hit that critical realistic balance between protecting the natural environment, which CEQ is trying to do, and the new expectations for massive new infrastructure development that can’t take 7-8 years from concept development to shovel-in-the-ground if we want to hit the climate-change targets that the president is talking about? You can’t have it both ways.” - TPI President Alex Herrgott

[TPI President Alex Herrgott testified before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs at a hearing titled *Strategies for Improving Critical Energy Infrastructure*](#)

TPI President Alex Herrgott was a Democratic witness invited by Senator Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ), and his testimony highlighted the relationship between skyrocketing energy costs and the permitting delays experienced by so many renewable energy projects. Currently, a lengthy 7–10-year project development cycle for major infrastructure – a significant portion of which is consumed by the unpredictable federal permitting process – keeps the U.S. from achieving many of its renewable energy goals.

“The lack of a predictable permitting process is the enemy of progress, and that uncertainty is keeping hundreds of billions of new U.S. investments from getting off the sidelines and investing in more cost-efficient, next-generation infrastructure.”

[Bloomberg Law: Round Two of Environment Permit Change to Ask: Revert or Refine?](#)

-Excerpt from the article by Stephen Lee-

Alex Herrgott, who led the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council during the Trump years, surmised that CEQ left a second rulemaking dangling to react to the outcome of the bipartisan infrastructure package and its NEPA provisions.

The new rulemaking could risk the solar arrays, wind farms, and transmission lines that must be built to reach Biden’s plan to create a carbon-free power sector by 2035, said Herrgott, now president of The Permitting Institute, a pro-development association.