

Colorado (Mr. CRANK) and the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. RANDALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CRANK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2916, the bill now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

Mr. CRANK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2916, to authorize, ratify, and confirm the Agreement of Settlement and Compromise to resolve the Akwesasne Mohawk Land Claim in the State of New York, introduced by the gentlewoman from New York, Congresswoman STEFANIK.

The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe is located on the border of New York and Canada along the St. Lawrence River. Following the Revolutionary War, the Seven Nations of Canada and the State of New York signed the 1796 Treaty, which gave the Tribe its reservation.

In 1824 and 1825, New York acquired land from the Tribe without the Federal Government's approval, violating the Non-Intercourse Act, which reserves to the United States the exclusive right to acquire Indian lands and prohibits conveyance without Federal approval.

After decades of court proceedings, a 2022 Northern District of New York ruling determined that the State of New York's 1825 purchase of land violated the Non-Intercourse Act. Mediation between the parties resumed and culminated in a settlement signed earlier this year.

The settlement would return approximately 3,500 acres of land to reservation status and would allow the Tribe to acquire up to 14,000 additional acres from willing sellers. Additional provisions in the settlement include waived tuition and mandatory fees for Akwesasne Mohawk students attending State University of New York institutions and preferred-rate power from the New York Power Authority.

The settlement requires no Federal monetary contribution and clearly defines the reservation's boundaries.

Negotiated settlements related to Indian land claims under the Non-Intercourse Act require congressional approval, and that is why we are here today.

H.R. 2916 would authorize, ratify, and confirm the Akwesasne Mohawk Land Claim Settlement Agreement and bring final resolution to a longstanding claim.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. RANDALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2916 would finalize a longstanding land claim in New York for the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe by ratifying and confirming the Agreement of Settlement and Compromise to resolve the Akwesasne Mohawk Land Claim in the State of New York.

Under this settlement, the Tribe will see 3,500 acres of land returned to reservation status and have the opportunity to acquire up to 14,000 acres of land in the land claim areas.

The settlement also provides Akwesasne Mohawk students who attend State University of New York institutions free tuition and mandatory fees.

In addition, the Tribe will have the right to nine megawatts of power at a preferred rate from the New York Power Authority and will receive \$70 million from the power authority over 35 years.

This legislation will finally resolve the Akwesasne Land Claim after 43 years of litigation and 11 years of negotiation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CRANK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. STEFANIK), the lead sponsor of this bill.

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Representative CRANK, for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2916, my bill to ratify the land claim settlement agreement between the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, New York State, Franklin and St. Lawrence Counties, the towns of Fort Covington and Bombay, and the New York Power Authority.

For more than 40 years, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe and the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne have worked diligently to resolve the Akwesasne land claim in northern New York in my district. The last decade has seen very focused efforts between the Tribe, local, and county officials, and our congressional office to realize this long-sought agreement dating back to the 1796 Treaty with the Seven Nations of Canada.

This historic settlement provides long-term certainty and remedies in terms of lands, land acquisition, payment of past property taxes, and will greatly benefit our North Country community.

For the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, today's action represents the resolution of a generations-long fight, and finalizing this settlement allows the Tribe to restore portions of their homeland, strengthen self-governance, and expand economic opportunities for the North Country.

Unfortunately, I was dismayed to watch the agreement sit on the Governor's desk for over 6 months while she refused to review the documents and then pushed last-minute changes, leaving members of the Saint Regis

Mohawk Tribe and the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, who worked alongside my office on this legislation, in limbo and long awaiting the culmination of over 40 years of their leadership's hard work.

Our office worked swiftly and diligently to pass this out of committee, and I am proud to have gotten this across the finish line in the House. I look forward to getting this legislation passed in the Senate and on to the President's desk for his signing.

Mr. Speaker, this moment is the culmination of the dedicated work by many past and present Mohawk leadership, elders, and community members from Akwesasne, as well as county and local officials, and I am honored to pass this bill in Congress.

Ms. RANDALL. Mr. Speaker, I urge support for this policy, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CRANK. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2916 gives the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe clarity on their reservation land and resolves a centuries-old violation of the Non-Intercourse Act. This settlement is long overdue and widely agreed upon. It is up to Congress to take the final steps and authorize the settlement.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the passage of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. CRANK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2916.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1630

#### STUDYING NEPA'S IMPACT ON PROJECTS ACT

Mr. CRANK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 573) to require the Council on Environmental Quality to publish an annual report on environmental reviews and causes of action based on alleged non-compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 573

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

*This Act may be cited as the "Studying NEPA's Impact on Projects Act".*

#### SEC. 2. ANNUAL REPORT ON NEPA'S IMPACT ON PROJECTS.

*Section 201 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4341) is amended to read as follows:*

#### "SEC. 201. ANNUAL REPORTS ON NEPA'S IMPACT ON PROJECTS.

*"(a) SUBMISSIONS BY LEAD AGENCIES.—Not later than July 1, 2026, and annually thereafter,*

the head of each lead agency shall submit to the Council on Environmental Quality a report on—

“(1) each civil action alleging an agency action in violation of this Act that was active during the period beginning June 1 of the preceding year and ending June 1 of the current year, which shall identify—

“(A) with respect to each such civil action—

“(i) the defendant lead agency, where applicable, and each plaintiff; and

“(ii) the court in which the civil action was brought and any court to which a decision on the civil action was appealed;

“(B) the number of such civil actions, disaggregated by the defendant agency, with a single entry denoting the lead agency, where applicable, for cases involving multiple Federal agency defendants;

“(C) the alleged basis for each such civil action, disaggregated by covered sectors; and

“(D) the status and outcome, if applicable, of each civil action alleging an agency action in violation of this Act that was active during the period beginning June 1 of the preceding year and ending June 1 of the current year, including whether—

“(i) the civil action resulted in a decision to hold unlawful and set aside the agency action within the meaning of section 706(2) of title 5, United States Code;

“(ii) the civil action resulted in a decision allowing the Federal agency to proceed with the major Federal action;

“(iii) the civil action resulted in an order remanding the matter to the agency for reconsideration without vacating the analysis;

“(iv) any claim under the civil action was resolved by a settlement agreement or consent decree between any plaintiff and the defendant lead agency;

“(v) the civil action is still active; and

“(vi) any of the plaintiffs received an award, including an award of costs pursuant to section 2412 of title 28, United States Code, except that if such information is received after the lead agency submits the applicable report to the Council on Environmental Quality, the lead agency shall include such information in the subsequent report;

“(2) the length of environmental impact statements made publicly available pursuant to section 102(2)(C) during the period of 5 years that ends on June 1 of the current year, which shall include—

“(A) the average and median page count of all such environmental impact statements (not including the page count of any citations or appendices), including such page counts disaggregated by quartiles;

“(B) the average and median page count of any citations and appendices included in such environmental impact statements;

“(C) the number of such environmental impact statements, disaggregated by lead agency and subagency as applicable;

“(D) a description of trends in average and median page count of such environmental impact statements and any citations and appendices included in such environmental impact statements compared to prior reports published by the Council on Environmental Quality; and

“(E) for each report submitted under this section through 2028, a disaggregation of the data from before and after the date of the enactment of the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023;

“(3) an estimate of the cost to prepare the environmental impact statements described in paragraph (2), including—

“(A) the full-time equivalent personnel hour costs, contractor costs, and other direct costs of the lead agency that prepared the environmental impact statement; and

“(B) if practicable, and noted where not practicable, the costs incurred by cooperating agencies, participating agencies, any project sponsor that prepared an environmental impact statement under the supervision of the lead agency, and contractors; and

“(4) the timelines to complete environmental impact statements pursuant to section 102(2)(C) during the period of 10 years that ends on June 1 of the current year, which shall include—

“(A) with respect to each major Federal action commenced during such period of 10 years, the date on which (as applicable)—

“(i) the project sponsor submitted an application for any permit or other authorization for the project;

“(ii) the lead agency began the scoping;

“(iii) the notice of intent to prepare the environmental impact statement was made publicly available;

“(iv) the environmental impact statement was made publicly available;

“(v) the record of decision was made publicly available; and

“(vi) the lead agency provided to the project sponsor notice to proceed on the project;

“(B) the average and median completion timelines during such period of 10 years for each document described in subparagraph (A);

“(C) a description of trends in completion timelines during such period of 10 years for such documents compared to prior reports published by the Council on Environmental Quality; and

“(D) for each report submitted under this section through 2033, a disaggregation of the data from before and after the date of the enactment of the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023.

“(b) PUBLICATION AND SUBMISSION OF REPORTS BY THE COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Council on Environmental Quality shall annually—

“(A) publish the reports received under subsection (a) on the website of the Council on Environmental Quality; and

“(B) submit such reports to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate.

“(2) INCLUSION IN OTHER REPORTS.—The Council on Environmental Quality may carry out paragraph (1)(B) by including the reports received under subsection (a) in the report submitted under section 107(h).

“(3) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF DATA.—The Council on Environmental Quality shall publish with each report published under paragraph (1)(A) the underlying data used to prepare each such report and include any citations or other information necessary for the public to locate records related to the court proceedings for any civil action described in subsection (a)(1).

“(c) FORMAT.—To the extent practicable, the information included in each report submitted to the Council on Environmental Quality under subsection (a) shall be disaggregated by covered sector.

“(d) COVERED SECTOR DEFINED.—In this section, the term ‘covered sector’ means any of the following sectors:

“(1) Aviation and space.

“(2) Broadband.

“(3) Carbon capture and sequestration.

“(4) Conventional energy production.

“(5) Electricity transmission.

“(6) Forestry.

“(7) Information technology infrastructure.

“(8) Manufacturing.

“(9) Mining.

“(10) Pipelines.

“(11) Ports and waterways.

“(12) Renewable energy production.

“(13) Surface transportation.

“(14) Water resources.

“(15) Any other sector as determined by the Council on Environmental Quality or lead agency.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. CRANK) and the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. RANDALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CRANK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 573, the bill now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

Mr. CRANK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 573, which would consolidate prior NEPA data collection and reporting efforts into a single report published annually by the Council on Environmental Quality, or CEQ. This bill ensures that consistent, transparent permitting data is available and accessible to the public.

It is well known that our permitting system is mired with substantial delays. Many of these issues stem from burdensome and lengthy environmental documents and lawsuits instigated by special interest groups.

In past administrations, CEQ has published reports on NEPA litigation and environmental reviews. From 2001 to 2013, annual surveys recorded the defendant agency, plaintiff category, and case results, showing that special interest groups, not individual citizens or communities, were responsible for the most NEPA cases.

Although these CEQ studies provided useful data on the cumbersome review timelines and resource strains resulting from NEPA analysis, they have either been produced ad hoc or attention to their continued production has fallen by the wayside.

Similar to CEQ's annual litigation surveys conducted between 2001 and 2013, the reports required by this bill would include information related to any NEPA-related civil action brought against an agency and would identify the lead Federal agency, each plaintiff, and case outcome. This information will allow Congress to identify who is suing to block critical infrastructure projects and examine the end result of the litigation on the project itself.

This bill would also build off the first Trump administration's NEPA reports conducted in 2020 by directing CEQ to review the page length of environmental impact statements and the timelines to complete such EIS, with updates published annually. This information will give Congress better insight into whether agencies are respecting the NEPA deadlines and page limits created in the Fiscal Responsibility Act.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the lead sponsor of this legislation, Representative YAKYM, for his hard work on this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. RANDALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Representative YAKYM's Studying NEPA's Impact on Projects Act. This legislation would direct agencies to

submit to the Council on Environmental Quality an annual report on NEPA lawsuits filed, the basis for the legal claim, and the outcome, if applicable.

I believe these reports will show there are far fewer NEPA lawsuits holding up projects than my colleagues across the aisle sometimes argue about, but regardless, this will be good data for decisionmakers to have.

The bill would also require reporting on the time it takes agencies to complete environmental impact statements and the number of pages of those analyses. The Council on Environmental Quality will then report annually on average lengths of time, page counts, and any directional trends.

I appreciate the majority working with us to also include requirements for disaggregating reporting to show page limits and timelines pre- and post-passage of the Fiscal Responsibility Act. This law placed new limits on page counts and 2-year deadlines for environmental impact statements. It will be important for us to know if these new requirements are really working.

Mr. Speaker, again, I support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CRANK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. YAKYM), the lead sponsor of this bill.

Mr. YAKYM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of my bipartisan bill, H.R. 573, the Studying NEPA's Impact on Projects Act, which I introduced with my good friend, Mr. PANETTA from California.

The National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, was passed in 1970 to look at the impacts of projects on the environment.

After decades of abuse and misuse, NEPA has strayed far from its original purpose. Now, it is a four-letter word, often weaponized to bury infrastructure, housing, energy, and other critical projects under a mound of paperwork and litigation.

NEPA is more synonymous with red tape than a green light. One recent study found that energy projects spend a median of 3 years from final agency approval to a final court decision, with some projects facing delays that last for decades.

At various points in time, the White House Council on Environmental Quality, or CEQ, has compiled reports on lawsuits, paperwork, and delays associated with NEPA, but these efforts have mostly been ad hoc.

This bill would formalize and consolidate these reports by requiring the CEQ to publish a single annual report detailing the burdens created by NEPA, including the volume of lawsuits, the length and complexity of environmental review and paperwork, and the cost of delays to taxpayers and project sponsors.

This report, coupled with the efforts of the Trump administration and this

Congress to rein in permitting burdens, will allow us to conduct oversight, ensure accountability, and identify areas of further reform.

The consequences of NEPA are felt across this country, from manufacturing and construction in my district to critical forest management, mining, and housing projects. These delays impact our economy, but they also constrain our efforts to achieve energy dominance, protect our national security, and compete with China.

This bill is an important step in our work to continue reforming the permitting process. It is time to get the government and unnecessary barriers out of the way of hardworking Americans who want to make America build again.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman WESTERMAN for his help in getting this bill to the floor and to my friend, Mr. PANETTA, for his partnership. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes."

Ms. RANDALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. PANETTA).

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise as a co-lead of the Studying NEPA's Impact on Projects Act.

As we have heard, this is a bill that would require the Council on Environmental Quality to provide annual reports that evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the Federal permitting process.

I thank Representative YAKYM for his leadership on this issue and really appreciate his willingness to work in a bipartisan fashion to fix our government's permitting process. It is a process that, as we know, can be bogged down, burdensome, and brutally bureaucratic, leading to unnecessary delays that make it very difficult to increase affordable housing, improve our infrastructure, and advance important energy and transmission projects.

People in California's 19th Congressional District, as well as I am sure people in the Second District of Indiana and communities all across the country, have a great amount of concern and consternation as the permitting process is stunting their will and ability to reduce their carbon output, to solve the affordability crisis, and to decrease the damage from natural disasters.

Requiring an annual report is a commonsensical and practical way to use evidence to find the issue, fix the process, and affirm our energy and environmental values. It is a first step—we get that—but we know it is also a very big and impactful step so that, together, we can implement our efforts to protect our planet, increase clean energy options for our country, and reduce costs for communities.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "aye."

□ 1640

Mr. CRANK. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. RANDALL. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CRANK. Mr. Speaker, the Studying NEPA's Impact on Projects Act will provide Congress with crucial information on NEPA litigation. It will also provide transparency to help ensure that agencies comply with the Fiscal Responsibility Act's NEPA deadlines and page limits.

I thank Mr. YAKYM and Mr. PANETTA for their work on this bill, and I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. CRANK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 573, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### EPERMIT ACT

Mr. CRANK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4503) to improve environmental reviews and authorizations through the use of interactive, digital, and cloud-based platforms, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4503

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "ePermit Act".

#### SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that—

(1) coordination between Federal, State, and local agencies and project sponsors is critical to ensuring the timely and effective completion of environmental reviews and authorizations, including through the sharing of relevant information, alignment of environmental review timelines, and integration of authorizations, while maintaining compliance with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements;

(2) digital strategies for environmental reviews have proven to make the community engagement process more accessible, available, and transparent to all stakeholders, especially the communities in which new projects are built;

(3) establishing robust data architectures will ensure data integrity, improve transparency, reduce costs, and enhance the ability of the Federal Government to serve the public;

(4) Federal agency use of modern software that can track the full lifecycle of environmental reviews and authorizations is critical for—

(A) effective project management and process improvement;

(B) enabling workflow automation, transparency, and tracking; and

(C) simplifying reporting requirements;