

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."

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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;

(5) modern business process management systems that track Federal agency workflows and produce vendor neutral, interoperable event, task, and other milestone data that can be shared with other Federal agency systems can reduce costs and improve performance for Federal agencies responsible for environmental reviews and authorizations;

(6) case and project management systems—

(A) are essential tools for managing the tasks and activities associated with environmental reviews and authorizations; and

(B) provide Federal agencies more data and insight into such environmental reviews and authorizations;

(7) well-defined business rules can enable process automation that allows Federal agencies responsible for environmental reviews or authorizations to expedite routine tasks and workflows, and improve transparency and accuracy of project timeline estimates, which in turn can help project sponsors better plan for application preparation and project delivery milestones;

(8) taking a standardized, digital-first perspective to environmental reviews and authorizations at Federal agencies responsible for environmental reviews or authorizations will improve document quality, lead to more concise reports, enable the reuse and accessibility of the data underpinning Federal agency analyses and decisions, and enable objective, technology-assisted evaluation of environmental impacts, analysis, and documentation, and accelerate future environmental reviews and authorizations;

(9) Federal agencies responsible for environmental reviews or authorizations, project sponsors, and the public should have access to up-to-date information on accurate timelines and the status of environmental reviews and authorizations; and

(10) allowing for seamless information exchange among Federal agencies and between Federal agencies and project sponsors will increase predictability and efficiency of environmental review and authorization schedules for project sponsors.

### SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF DATA STANDARDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality, in consultation with the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council, the Chief Information Officers Council, the Office of Management and Budget, and other relevant stakeholders and Federal agencies, shall develop, publish, and iteratively update data standards for the collection and curation of authorization data by Federal agencies, which shall be used to—

(1) assist with environmental reviews and authorizations;

(2) organize, define, and standardize various concepts, formats, and protocols that are included in environmental reviews and authorizations; and

(3) reduce the need for redundant environmental reviews by creating a shared vocabulary and software systems that will support vendor neutrality, data interoperability, workflow automation, and automatic data exchange between Federal agencies.

(b) INCLUSIONS.—The data standards developed, published, and iteratively updated under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) A standardized taxonomy that allows Federal agencies to identify and track data types, relationships, and values.

(2) Comprehensive categories for data, such as—

- (A) projects;
- (B) processes;
- (C) environmental documents;
- (D) public comments;

(E) geospatial information;

(F) public engagement events, as applicable by process or Federal agency;

(G) case events; and

(H) milestones to ensure clarity and uniformity.

### SEC. 4. DEVELOPMENT OF PROTOTYPE TOOLS.

The Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality, in consultation with the Administrator of General Services, the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council, the Chief Information Officers Council, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and other relevant stakeholders and Federal agencies, shall design, test, and build prototype tools for environmental reviews and authorizations that will assist Federal agencies in implementing the minimum functional requirements described in section 5. The Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality shall prioritize designing, testing, and building tools under this section that—

(1) support authorization case or project management systems that manage tasks, milestones, and activities associated with environmental reviews and authorizations, and provide Federal agencies more data and insight into such reviews and authorizations;

(2) enable—

(A) application submission and tracking portals used by project sponsors, enabling greater transparency; and

(B) public comment opportunity tracking portals to increase transparency;

(3) facilitate automated applications, environmental reviews, and authorizations;

(4) allow data exchange between Federal agency systems; and

(5) accelerate complex environmental reviews.

### SEC. 5. PUBLICATION OF GUIDANCE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF DATA STANDARDS AND MINIMUM FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS.

(a) PUBLICATION.—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality shall publish guidance for how each Federal agency responsible for environmental reviews or authorizations implements—

(1) the data standards published under section 3; and

(2) the following minimum functional requirements:

(A) Application data sharing that enables automated transfer of relevant environmental review and authorization data among Federal agencies.

(B) Automated project screening to assist frontline staff with reviewing project sponsor provided information for completeness and accuracy and determining if a categorical exclusion or other general authorization applies to an action. Automated project screening may not be used by the Council on Environmental Quality or a Federal agency to unlawfully restrict any activities on Federal lands.

(C) Public availability of screening criteria and related decision models.

(D) Automated case or project management tools which include a repository of relevant data and metadata that enable advanced tracking, reporting, and optimization to aid workflows.

(E) Integrated geographic information system analysis tools which incorporate geospatial data layers and models for each resource analyzed as part of an environmental review or authorization for a given study area.

(F) Document management tools that preserve metadata associated with geospatial analysis, modeling, and other analytic processes conducted during an environmental review or authorization, to support future re-

views and enable Artificial Intelligence-assisted analysis of past decisions.

(G) Automated comment compilation and analysis tools, including services for comment categorization and response that handle the lifecycle of comment submission, analysis, categorization and response with Artificial Intelligence support where appropriate.

(H) Administrative record management tools that maintain both portable document formats and data-rich repositories accessible to both machine and human users.

(I) Common or interoperable Federal agency services that integrate shared services, shared applications, and common user experiences for Federal agency staff, project sponsors, and the public.

(b) INCLUSIONS.—The guidance published under this section shall include the following:

(1) Guidelines for cloud-based storage, data sharing protocols, and application programming interfaces to enable the Council on Environmental Quality to work with Federal agencies to use authorization data to aid Federal agencies in modernizing their environmental reviews and authorizations and for iterative development of the authorization portal.

(2) Provisions that support scalability and adaptability of the minimum requirements to emerging technologies.

### SEC. 6. IMPLEMENTATION OF DATA STANDARDS AND MINIMUM FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS.

(a) IMPLEMENTATION.—The head of each Federal agency responsible for environmental reviews or authorizations shall—

(1) not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act—

(A) compare existing Federal agency systems for environmental reviews and authorizations under their authority with the data standards published under section 3 and the minimum functional requirements described in section 5(a)(2) and report findings from such comparison to the Council on Environmental Quality;

(B) assess whether existing Federal agency technological capabilities are consistent with the data standards published under section 3 and the minimum functional requirements described in section 5(a)(2);

(C) submit to the Council on Environmental Quality a report that estimates the completion dates for implementing the data standards published under section 3 and the minimum functional requirements described in section 5(a)(2); and

(D) submit to the Council on Environmental Quality, in consultation with the Council on Environmental Quality, an implementation plan that—

(i) describes how the Federal agency will implement the data standards published under section 3 and the minimum functional requirements described in section 5(a)(2); and

(ii) describes how, to the extent the Federal agency determines necessary to meet relevant statutory requirements, the Federal agency will adopt or implement the prototype tools tested, designed, and built under section 4; and

(2) not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, begin implementing the data standards published under section 3 and the minimum functional requirements described in section 5(a)(2).

(b) REPORT.—Not less frequently than twice each year, the Chief Information Officer of each Federal agency, in consultation with the Chief Environmental Review and Permitting Officer of each Federal agency, shall submit to the Council on Environmental Quality and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget a report on the

progress of the Federal agency towards meeting the requirements of subsection (a).

## SEC. 7. UNIFIED INTERAGENCY DATA SYSTEM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) UNIFIED INTERAGENCY DATA SYSTEM.—To the maximum extent practicable, the Chair of the Council of Environmental Quality and the head of each Federal agency responsible for environmental reviews or authorizations shall iteratively develop and maintain a unified interagency data system consisting of interconnected Federal agency systems and shared services for environmental reviews and authorizations.

(2) AUTHORIZATION PORTAL.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The shared services developed and maintained under paragraph (1) shall include a common interactive, digital, cloud-based authorization portal, which shall—

(i) be designed in a manner consistent with—

(I) the recommendations of the Council on Environmental Quality included in the study submitted pursuant to section 110 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4336d) titled “Council on Environmental Quality Report to Congress on the Potential for Online and Digital Technologies to Address Delays in Reviews and Improve Public Accessibility and Transparency under 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)”; and

(II) the minimum functional requirements described in section 5(a)(2);

(ii) serve as a platform for tracking and displaying real-time data on environmental reviews and authorizations made available through application programming interfaces or other reporting mechanisms from Federal agency systems that are compliant with the data standards and data architecture described in this Act;

(iii) be supported by a decentralized, cross-network digital infrastructure software that ensures vendor neutrality and interoperability of data and models across Federal agencies;

(iv) include a mechanism for the dissemination of relevant information (such as a notice of intent for public comment, public meetings, project statuses, or a notice of intent to begin an environmental review) to local communities, as applicable;

(v) allow a project sponsor to submit all necessary documentation for environmental reviews and authorizations in one unified and secure portal;

(vi) support interactive, digital, and cloud-based tools enabling applicants to edit documents and collaborate with relevant Federal agencies in real time;

(vii) support visual features, including video, animation, geographic information system displays, interactive maps, and three-dimensional renderings;

(viii) provide for the exchange of information to and from Federal agency data systems via an application programming interface or another reporting mechanisms;

(ix) allow for the submission of geospatial data associated with project location, footprint, and impact;

(x) support automatic documentation of submission and process timelines; and

(xi) allow the following metrics to be tracked over time—

(I) estimates of achieved efficiencies, such as reductions in the time between receipt of applications and final authorization decisions;

(II) comparisons of authorization timelines before and after the implementation of this Act;

(III) usage of the authorization portal and other statistics from the Digital Analytics Program;

(IV) metrics on the number of public comments received, responses provided, and community meetings held;

(V) the number of projects subject to litigation based on authorization deficiencies or inefficiencies;

(VI) a list of Federal agencies that are not yet fully compliant with the data standards published under section 3 and the minimum functional requirements described in section 5(a)(2), along with their progress toward compliance; and

(VII) examples or repositories of Federal agency-developed digital workflows enabled by the implementation of this Act, including visualizations of data sharing, authorizations and decision logic, and environmental reviews.

(B) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.—The Administrator of General Services shall host the authorization portal as a shared service for Congress, Federal agencies, and the public.

(C) ACCESSABILITY.—The authorization portal shall be accessible to Congress, Federal agencies, and the public, with appropriate safeguards to protect sensitive or classified information and information restricted by user type as appropriate.

(D) PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY.—To the extent practicable and consistent with other law, the authorization portal shall provide public access to non-sensitive data, including authorization timelines, location, project type, environmental reviews, and mitigation measures.

(E) CONGRESSIONAL ACCESS AND OVERSIGHT.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The authorization portal shall provide Congress with direct access to aggregated performance data and other analytics to enable real-time oversight of Federal agencies.

(ii) ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND TRAINING MATERIALS.—Congress shall have access to the data, fine-tuning procedures, and prompt configurations specifically created or adapted for Artificial Intelligence systems used to support environmental review or authorization activities, excluding proprietary or general pretraining materials unrelated to such agency-specific customization.

(iii) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Council on Environmental Quality shall provide to Congress technical assistance upon request to ensure effective use of the authorization portal and Artificial Intelligence systems for oversight purposes.

(3) CYBERSECURITY AND COMPLIANCE CONSIDERATIONS.—The authorization portal shall be designed to promote vendor neutral interoperability, reduce redundancy, and ensure compliance and coordination with other laws, including—

(A) section 552a of title 5, United States Code (commonly referred to as the Privacy Act of 1974), and subchapter II of chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code;

(B) the Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program established under section 3608 of title 44, United States Code; and

(C) the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency of the Department of Homeland Security, for a case in which the project is in coordination with a Federal agency with stringent security requirements.

(b) DEADLINES.—

(1) SHARED SERVICES PILOT.—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Council on Environmental Quality shall oversee piloting of shared services for environmental reviews and authorizations, including the authorization portal under subsection (a)(2).

(2) UNIFIED SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION.—To the maximum extent practicable, not later than December 1, 2027, the Chair of the Council on Environmental

Quality shall develop and implement the unified interagency data system required under subsection (a)(1).

(c) REPORT.—Not less frequently than annually, the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality, in consultation with the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council, the Chief Information Officers Council, and other relevant stakeholders and Federal agencies, shall submit to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate a report on the Council on Environmental Quality's progress on developing a unified interagency data system under subsection (a).

## SEC. 8. AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTS.

Subject to the availability of appropriations, the Council on Environmental Quality may enter into contracts and other arrangements for analyses, services, and products with Federal agencies, private organizations, and businesses, and make such payments as determined necessary by the Council on Environmental Quality to carry out the provisions of this Act.

## SEC. 9. CLARIFYING RULEMAKING AUTHORITY.

Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize the Council on Environmental Quality or a Federal agency to impose additional regulatory processes or requirements beyond those expressly stipulated under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) or any other law.

## SEC. 10. SAVINGS CLAUSE.

To the extent that a data system, technology, or tool developed or incorporated into a unified interagency data system under this Act is not limited by project type, the data system, technology, or tool shall not have its use be restricted by project type.

## SEC. 11. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) AUTHORIZATION.—The term “authorization” means any license, permit, approval, finding, determination, or other administrative decision issued by an agency and any interagency consultation that is required or authorized under Federal law in order to site, construct, reconstruct, or commence operations of a project administered by a Federal agency.

(2) AUTHORIZATION DATA.—The term “authorization data” means—

(A) any data relevant for a Federal agency to—

(i) determine the effect on the environment of an action for which an authorization is required by the Federal agency; and

(ii) determine whether to issue such authorization; and

(B) any community input or public comment on such determinations.

(3) DATA ARCHITECTURE.—The term “data architecture” means the design and organization of data systems, including frameworks for data storage, processing, and exchange.

(4) DATA STANDARDS.—The term “data standards” means agreed-upon specifications for data formats, structures, and definitions to ensure consistency and vendor neutral interoperability.

(5) ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW.—The term “environmental review” means any Federal agency procedures or processes for—

(A) applying a categorical exclusion; or

(B) preparing an environmental assessment, an environmental impact statement, or another document required under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

(6) FEDERAL AGENCY.—The term “Federal agency” has the meaning given the term “agency” in section 551 of title 5, United States Code.

(7) FEDERAL PERMITTING IMPROVEMENT STEERING COUNCIL.—The term “Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council” has the meaning given the term “Council” in section 41001 of the FAST Act (42 U.S.C. 4370m).

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 to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4503, 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. 4503, the ePermit Act, which will establish a governmentwide technology strategy to improve Federal permitting processes and timelines. I thank my colleagues, Representatives JOHNSON and PETERS, for their strong bipartisan work on this legislation.

Today’s digital landscape for Federal permitting is out of date, consisting of diverse and isolated systems spread across different Federal agencies. Generally, these systems are not interoperable or sufficiently accessible for project sponsors or the general public.

To address these issues, the Trump administration issued a memorandum titled: “Updating Permitting Technology for the 21st Century.” The Council on Environmental Quality, or CEQ, subsequently issued a Permitting Technology Action Plan. The plan sets the foundation for the seamless exchange of information between agencies, simplified interactions for applicants, and greater transparency and predictability on environmental review and permitting schedules for project sponsors and stakeholders.

The ePermit Act would codify key aspects of CEQ’s action plan and provide Federal agencies with direction on implementation of electronic permitting systems. It would also instruct CEQ to work with other agencies to establish a unified interagency data system for environmental permitting and integrate AI into agencies’ permitting processes.

As the world increasingly adopts new technology solutions to boost productivity and improve project outcomes, the Federal Government must do the same or risk being left behind.

The ePermit Act takes a strong step in the right direction by modernizing Federal permitting technology in a project-agnostic manner.

Again, I thank my colleagues, Representatives JOHNSON and PETERS, for this commonsense bipartisan bill. I ask my colleagues to join me in support.

Mr. Speaker, 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 strong support of the ePermit Act sponsored by my colleague, Representative DUSTY JOHNSON, and co-led by Representative SCOTT PETERS.

The ePermit Act will help enhance and deploy technology to improve permitting processes all across the Federal Government. Perhaps more importantly, the bill is an example of what can be accomplished with a bipartisan approach to problem solving and good-faith negotiations.

The Fiscal Responsibility Act directed the Biden administration to study the possibility of improving digital tools for permitting. Representatives JOHNSON and PETERS partnered to turn those Biden administration recommendations into good legislation. The current administration has helped finalize the bill with further input from both Democrats and Republicans.

Again, I strongly support this bill, and I hope to do more of this kind of important bipartisan work in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CRANK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON), the lead sponsor of this bill.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Colorado for yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, I will admit to being pretty excited that the ePermit Act is on the floor today, not just because it is my bill but because America needs this.

For years, both parties have agreed that our permitting system is too slow. It is too complicated. Frankly, it is too stuck in the past. That is too bad because, really, the story of America has been in no small part a history of big ideas and big projects. It is time for us to get back to that: for more housing, for more broadband, for more critical infrastructure that will power this American economy for decades to come.

Too often in the last few years, our permitting process has stood in the way of that. Here we are, arguably the most technologically advanced nation in the world. Yet, our agencies have been using decades-old fragmented systems that simply were not built for the kind of scale and complexity that we see with modern projects.

It is almost laughable. We have got modern agencies. We have multiple agencies that will look at the same project using different data standards, using different approaches, and different systems. Believe it or not, they are still trading old, outdated, mostly static PDFs.

Perhaps not surprisingly, this creates confusion, delay, and a lack of transparency for project developers, for communities, for the public, and for

our own Federal agencies. Sometimes they don’t even know with specificity what is going on at a particular stage in the process.

This bill, the ePermit Act, addresses those problems. Because of this bill, we will modernize and digitize our permitting process with uniform data standards and a unified permitting portal so that agencies can work together and so that the public and communities can see what is actually happening.

Of course, as the gentlewoman mentioned, we are not starting from scratch. I was involved when Congress recognized the importance of these digital solutions in the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023. She is right that the Trump administration has prioritized this work, and we have worked with the administration to bring legislative clarity to that vision.

Let’s be honest. There are many parts of the siting and permitting process that Republicans and Democrats disagree on, but this is not one of them. A more efficient and a more transparent permitting system is bipartisan. Our diverse coalition of cosponsors and supporting stakeholders shows just that.

I thank Mr. PETERS for being a good partner on this legislation. I thank Chairman WESTERMAN and Ranking Member HUFFMAN for their support.

Mr. Speaker, the ePermit Act is a win for builders, a win for transparency, a win for communities and the public, and a win for America’s competitiveness. I urge my colleagues to join us in letting America build again.

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

Mr. CRANK. Mr. Speaker, this is an important piece of legislation. I urge my colleagues to support the 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. 4503, 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.

#### PUBLIC LANDS MILITARY READINESS ACT OF 2025

Mr. CRANK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5131) to extend military land withdrawals in Alaska, New Mexico, and California for a period of 25 years and to make technical corrections to descriptions for certain military land withdrawals, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5131

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