



# County of Monterey

## Board of Supervisors

Luis A. Alejo, District 1  
Glenn Church, District 2  
Chris M. Lopez, District 3  
Wendy Root Askew, Chair, District 4  
Kate Daniels, Vice Chair, District 5

Clerk of the Board  
168 West Alisal St. 1st Floor  
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February XX, 2026

The Honorable Alex Padilla  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Schiff  
12 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

### **Re: Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act (H.R. 4776) – OPPOSE unless AMENDED**

Dear Senators Padilla and Schiff:

On behalf of the County of Monterey Board of Supervisors, I am writing to express our opposition to the Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act (H.R. 4776). We appreciate the bipartisan intent underlying the SPEED Act and recognize that thoughtful permitting reform is necessary to advance critical infrastructure, energy development, and economic growth across the county. However, as the bill is currently drafted, we must oppose the SPEED Act due to several provisions that raise significant policy concerns.

First, latent amendments to the bill resulted in insufficient safeguards against executive interference in the permitting process. These changes could allow political or administrative pressures to override previously completed environmental reviews, undermining confidence in the integrity and finality of agency decisions. For example, in January 2025 the Trump Administration issued an Executive Order which required the temporary withdrawal of wind leasing on the outer continental shelf and prevented federal agencies from issuing new or renewed “approvals, rights of way, permits, leases, or loans for onshore or offshore wind projects.” We cannot support the SPEED Act without additional permit certainty to ensure that lawful, fully permitted projects are protected from such executive interference.

Second, the bill does not provide adequate assurances for the fair and equitable treatment of renewable energy projects. Specifically, the bill does not address laws outside of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This is problematic because the Department of Interior has recently required routine decisions on renewable energy to route directly through the Secretary’s office. The SPEED ACT must go beyond NEPA and ensure that non-fossil energy sources are treated fairly.

Third, while we support the act’s efforts to reform judicial review, we are concerned about the proposed limitations on standing. As drafted, the SPEED Act would limit standing to public commentators who had “unique and substantive” comments during a public comment period. In addition, it restricts challenges to *only* those concerns raised during the comment period. This erosion of potential future legal standing is simply unacceptable.



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To put it into perspective, the County of Monterey recently submitted comments on the development of the 11<sup>th</sup> National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program. In no way, should the scope or framing of these comments limit the County's access to justice if the program results in specific harm to the County—foreseeable or not. These changes risk unduly narrowing access to the courts for communities and stakeholders which will be directly affected by federal permitting decisions.

Finally, as written, this bill prevents a court from stopping or pausing a project if the underlying environmental analysis is faulty, fraudulent, or absent. This means agencies will not be held accountable for making unfounded decisions. While we support judicial review reform, omitting review in these circumstances allows for arbitrary decision making and reduces environmental analysis to a mere formality.

The County of Monterey remains supportive of responsible, bipartisan permitting reform. If the SPEED Act were amended to strength safeguards against executive interference, ensure fair treatment for renewable energy project, revise the “unique and substantive” standing requirement, and provide for adequate remedies, we would be willing to reconsider our position and support a revised version of this legislation. The SPEED Act, as currently drafted, does not yet strike that necessary balance.

We appreciate your continued support for the County of Monterey and on behalf of the Board of Supervisors urge you to oppose The SPEED Act until these important changes are made.

Sincerely,

**DRAFT**

**Wendy Root Askew, Chair**  
Board of Supervisors

Cc: The Honorable Zoe Lofgren, 18<sup>th</sup> Congressional District  
The Honorable Jimmy Panetta, 19<sup>th</sup> Congressional District



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