

RIBBLE STREAMLINING AMENDMENT – KEY POINTS

- Overall, this amendment seeks to reduce duplicative permitting requirements that prevent infrastructure projects from moving forward.
- The amendment streamlines the project delivery process by working with state authorities to have a single approval process and creating hard deadlines for reviews to be completed.
- This amendment could cut in half the average lifespan of a project by authorizing concurrent review among federal agencies, delegating more decision making authority to the states, and setting hard deadlines for federal agencies to approve projects. Under the current process, the average lifespan of a project is 15 years, only five of which actually involve construction.
- The amendment allows federal agencies to review projects concurrently and establishes a single submission process. Wherever practical, project approval authority can be delegated to state agencies, which likely know and understand local conditions far better than federal agencies.
- The amendment allows for pre-construction activities to occur concurrently with the review process, rather than sequentially. There are logical limits on the pre-construction activities, such as acquisition of land only when the transaction does not result in a change in land use or adverse environmental effects, as well as other state-based activities that will only be reimbursed after the review is complete.
- The amendment provides an exemption from the review process for emergency situations (where the Stafford Act has been invoked) so that the top priority can be getting communities back on track. The storms and flooding that hit the East Coast last year are a good example; the priority should be getting roads and bridges repaired, not an endless permitting process.
- The amendment creates a hard deadline for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review whereby the project will be considered approved if the deadline is reached without a decision. The goal should be to get the project underway in a timely manner, not a never-ending review process.
- This does not eliminate NEPA or the need for an environmental review to occur. However, the current process forces duplicative submissions and approvals that can render a project obsolete prior to breaking ground. This amendment ensures that the different agencies of the Federal Government work together and that those agencies work with states to get projects completed.