

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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VICE PRESIDENT  
ENVIRONMENT, TECHNOLOGY &  
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October 31, 2001

James L. Connaughton  
Chair, Council on Environmental Quality  
Executive Office of the President  
17<sup>th</sup> and G Streets, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Connaughton:

This is the response of the United States Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region, to your request for comments on the ways the Energy Task Force can work with federal agencies to expedite their review of energy-related projects. 66 Fed.Reg. 43,586 (Aug. 20, 2001). Many of our members produce or transmit energy, and the rest would benefit from a more efficient approval process. We support the efforts of the Energy Task Force to develop and implement a streamlined process for the approval of energy projects.

The review of energy projects is not coordinated. Projects often require approvals from several federal, state, and local entities, which may result in sequential and duplicative reviews. For example, a natural gas pipeline might require approvals from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (wetlands, streams), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (endangered species), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (air emissions), the state environmental agency (land, water, stream, endangered species, air), state historic preservation office (cultural resources), and local agencies (building permits). The present system requires providing the same or similar data to numerous agencies, and results in a substantial delay and increased costs.

A coordinated process would be much more efficient because Federal agencies could harmonize their data gathering and project review. This would improve both the quality and speed of the federal review process. At this critical time, a more efficient energy project approval process would help us meet our growing energy needs.

Sincerely,



William L. Kovacs