



May 20, 2024

The Honorable Joe Manchin
Chairman, Senate Energy and
Natural Resources Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Barrasso
Ranking Member, Senate Energy and
Natural Resources Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC

Dear Chairman Manchin and Ranking Member Barrasso:

On behalf of the [Clean Energy Buyers Association](#) (CEBA), whose more than 400 members represent over \$15 trillion in market capitalization and include one fifth of the Fortune 500, I am writing to urge you to continue working toward modernizing federal siting and permitting that upgrades the nation's power grid system through new generation and improved electricity transmission capacity in the United States.

Collectively, CEBA's membership is driving billions in new investments across the country. Our ability to continue to grow and innovate is directly tied to our ability to access affordable, reliable, and clean energy to power our operations.

The U.S. electric grid is vital to our economy, our healthcare system, our national defense, and our homes and schools. It is one of the greatest engineering feats of the 20th century, but it is in urgent need of 21st-century modernization. Right now, outdated federal permitting policies and aging grid infrastructure are standing in the way of new investments in the U.S. economy.

The pace of demand growth for electricity across the nation is expected to nearly [double](#) in the next five years. This real and sizable growth is coming from a variety of [sectors](#), including reshoring of manufacturing, oil and gas production, electrification, and huge growth in the needs of a data-driven economy. We want to clear the path for more investment and innovation to happen here in the U.S. and a modern electric grid is crucial to doing so.

As large electricity customers, we are already experiencing barriers to reliable power across the country. Currently, nearly 2.6 terawatts of generation and storage of all types remain stuck in interconnection queues across the nation, in part due to transmission congestion that prevents these projects from coming online. At the same time, extreme weather events increasingly threaten the power grid's reliability and stability, which comes at a huge cost to all power consumers. Under our current transmission system, one severe thunderstorm, as we've seen this past week in Houston, Texas, can deprive thousands of consumers and businesses of power, and productivity in turn, and even lives lost, in an instant. This should not be the case in 21st century America.

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Modernizing and expanding the U.S. power system will lower energy customer costs, improve reliability, and help meet the growing demand for electricity across the country. This will attract investment and manufacturing that advances our shared goals of creating jobs for American workers, protecting national security through grid resilience, fostering innovation, and growing the economy.

We applaud you for holding a full Committee hearing to examine the opportunities, risks, and challenges associated with growth in electric power demand across the United States. We respectfully urge the Committee to continue working in earnest to develop and pass bipartisan legislation reforming federal transmission siting and permitting.

The recent rules from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), permitting reform legislation passed by this Congress last year, and actions from the U.S. Department of Energy are important steps, but only Congress can make the deeper, legislative reforms that are ultimately needed. We look forward to working with you on this important legislation. The backbone of the modern economy cannot wait.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Rich Powell'.

Rich Powell
CEO, Clean Energy Buyers Association (CEBA)

CC: Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Members