Energy Permitting Reform Act of 2024: U.S. Senators Manchin/Barrasso Introduce Legislation

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United States Senators Joe Manchin (I-WV) and John Barasso (R-WY) have introduced legislation titled:

Energy Permitting Reform Act of 2024. ("Act").

The Senators are the Chairman and Ranking Member, respectively, of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

The legislation is described as "bipartisan" and that it will:

…strengthen American energy security by accelerating the permitting process for critical energy and mineral projects of all types in the United States.

The issues addressed in the Act are stated to include:

- Judicial review (shortens timelines before, during, and after litigation on all types of federal authorization for energy and mineral projects, without changing any existing rights to seek judicial review).
- Onshore energy and minerals (accelerates leasing and permitting decisions for all types of energy projects on federal lands, without bypassing environmental and land-use laws).
- Offshore energy (requires the Secretary of Interior to hold at least one offshore wind lease sale and one offshore oil and gas lease sale per year from 2025-2029, subject to minimum acreage requirements, without bypassing environmental reviews).
- Electric transmission (reforms existing backstop citing authority for interstate electric transmission lines and requires interregional transmission planning).
- Electric reliability (requires the FERC and NERC to assess future federal regulations significantly affecting power plants and offer formal comments to federal agencies about any effects on electrical reliability).
- Liquified natural gas exports (sets a 90-day deadline for the Secretary of Energy to grant or deny LNG export applications following environmental reviews, with applications deemed approved if the Secretary fails to meet the deadline).
- Allows FERC to extend start-construction deadlines for certain existing hydropower licenses.

The Sierra Club issues a July 22nd statement discussing the Act which states in part:

…While the Bill includes provisions that may accelerate the deployment of clean energy and the transmission infrastructure that is needed to support it, including some Sierra Club has supported in other

contexts, the Biden-Harris Administration has already put forward comprehensive policies to unleash clean energy, improve the resilience of the power grid, and improve affordability for consumers.

A link to the Act can be found here.