

Beth Johnston

From: Tess Dornfeld <t.e.dornfeld@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2024 1:03 PM
To: Beth Johnston
Subject: [EXTERNAL] SF4784 - 3/19 State & Local Government

Hi Beth, please see below my written testimony for tomorrow's hearing. Thanks.

Dear Chair Dziedzic and Committee Members,

I am writing with my significant concerns about the scope of SF4784 on energy infrastructure permitting. I am strongly in favor of aggressive action to accelerate a clean energy future for the sake of climate impacts, and the consequences of fossil fuel production and use on communities from local pollution and other impacts. Personally I am an avid cross-country skier, but I have not been able to ski once this "winter" because of the record-breaking temperatures. I could say much more about my concern, background, and connections to climate and clean energy, but suffice it to say I take it as seriously as anyone does.

However, this bill as written goes well beyond the procedural reforms that would make it easier to get to the clean energy system that we need. It contains a number of provisions that would ease processes and loosen restrictions on fossil fuel projects and infrastructure. This is completely counterproductive and contradicts the supposed aim of permitting reform to accelerate clean energy infrastructure.

I am particularly concerned that most projects including fossil fuel projects would no longer require an EIS, and some projects including conversions to fossil gas would not require a permit at all. These changes would plainly make it easier for more fossil energy to be permitted and produced, defeating the purpose of trying to move away from these sources.

The measures in this bill that reduce the types of information about a project that are required to be provided are also of concern especially as they extend to fossil fuel and other projects beyond clean energy.

Finally, weakening public input processes and timelines is not the right way to speed permitting even for clean energy projects, and is certainly inappropriate for fossil fuel projects. Communities deserve the opportunity to be informed and share their concerns about projects for which they will be impacted and bear the costs and risks, and these processes are already difficult for most residents to engage with effectively.

There are worthwhile aims represented by this bill, but it extends much too far in its inclusion of fossil fuel and other projects that would not advance a clean energy future, and weakening important safeguards that are needed to ensure a just transition.

Sincerely,

Tess Dornfeld
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