



## MYTH VS FACT

### Food & Water Watch on Permitting Reform

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As Congress considered permitting reform late last year, the Food & Water Watch (FWW) lie machine sprang into action, falsely claiming that leading proposals would force municipalities to “hand over” their water systems to water companies. The episode proves once again that FWW is not a credible, trustworthy source of information.

### FWW Myth

FWW Claim: “Trump’s latest scheme to put corporations before people is now taking place in our water. A bill in Congress aims to force local governments to hand over their water systems to private firms. This will lead to higher water bills and poorly run water systems! Will you call [your U.S. Representative] and urge them to oppose the bill?”

**“... [The bills are] the PERMIT Act (H.R. 3898) and the SPEED Act (H.R. 4776).”**

### The Facts

#### **HR 3898: Promoting Efficient Review for Modern Infrastructure Today Act (PERMIT Act)**

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According to the Congressional Research Service bill summary, the PERMIT Act would redefine the legal definition of “navigable waters” to exclude “waste treatment systems, ephemeral features that flow only in direct response to precipitation, prior converted cropland, groundwater, or any other features determined to be excluded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.”

Supporters argued the bill streamlines permitting for projects with minimal impacts, thereby reducing costs and providing regulatory certainty for developers, farmers, and energy producers.

Opponents argued the bill weakens the Clean Water Act, encourages pollution, fast-tracks harmful projects, and prioritizes industry over the environment. Notably, Clean Water Action’s opposition fact sheet does not mention any provision regarding ownership of municipal water systems.

## **HR 4776: Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development Act (SPEED Act)**

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According to the Congressional Research Service bill summary, the SPEED Act would limit the scope of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). For example, the bill specifies that the provision of federal funds alone does not imply a project is eligible for review under NEPA. It also excludes from NEPA review any proposed action that has already been reviewed under another federal, state, or tribal environmental review statute that meets the requirements of NEPA.

Supporters argued the bill promotes investment and speeds up infrastructure and energy projects by establishing clearer rules, tighter timelines, and focused environmental reviews while also limiting lawsuits to genuinely impacted parties.

Opponents argued the bill could significantly diminish NEPA's effectiveness, favor the fossil fuel industry, and allow potentially harmful or illegal projects to move forward without proper accountability. Notably, an opposition letter signed by 100 organizations does not mention any provision regarding ownership of municipal water systems.