October 16, 2026

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
The Honorable Mike Lee
The Honorable Martin Heinrich
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Capito, Whitehouse, Lee, and Heinrich,

On behalf of the Conservative Energy Network (CEN), and our network of state and local energy leaders across the country, we write to express our strong support for S. 5653, the Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act of 2026 (BAAJA), and to commend your leadership in advancing comprehensive, bipartisan permitting and energy reform.

America is facing a once-in-a-generation opportunity to modernize how we plan, permit, and build the infrastructure that powers our economy. Rapid growth in energy demand, aging energy infrastructure, rising affordability concerns, and increasing competition for domestic manufacturing and technological leadership are converging at this historic moment, and our country must be able to meet the demand. These challenges will not be easy to overcome, but this legislation gives America a fighting chance to build new energy infrastructure and to replace, upgrade, and improve our energy system writ large. Its passage will mark a major victory for the American people.

As a national network of state-based conservative energy organizations and leaders, CEN advances policies that strengthen energy reliability, protect affordability, support economic opportunity, advance and secure our energy system and supply, as well as encourage the overall adoption of clean energy as part of an all-of-the above energy strategy. Through our engagement with state policymakers, regulators, utilities, businesses, and local stakeholders, we see firsthand the challenges of meeting growing electricity demand, modernizing infrastructure, and delivering new energy resources to the communities that need them. While these challenges differ across states and regions, they increasingly point to a shared national reality: **America's ability to build, upgrade, and expand its energy infrastructure is not keeping pace with the demands put on the grid.**

S. 5653 represents an important opportunity to address these challenges together. We are particularly encouraged by the robust, bipartisan nature of this legislation and its alignment with numerous proposals advanced in the House addressing permitting modernization, transmission development, grid innovation, and consumer protection. This overlap demonstrates a shared recognition across Congress that meaningful infrastructure reform is both necessary and urgent if we want to continue to lead domestically and internationally. The Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act offers a real opportunity to bring these efforts together into a durable framework that extends beyond any single technology, industry, or political administration.

CEN consistently calls for policies that allow America to build more, build smarter, and build faster. This legislation makes meaningful progress on all three.

Building More. America needs additional energy generation and expanded transmission infrastructure to reliably deliver electricity to the communities and industries that need it. The legislation's reforms to federal permitting, transmission siting, and regional and interregional planning can help overcome longstanding barriers to developing the infrastructure required to keep our power reliable, affordable, and able to support the economic competitiveness that makes us a world leader.

Building Smarter. Meeting growing demand does not require starting from scratch. Much of America's existing energy infrastructure is aging and must be modernized, upgraded, or replaced to maintain reliability and support future growth. We strongly support this legislation's recognition of the value of reconducturing, advanced transmission technologies, existing rights-of-way uses, and more efficient infrastructure planning. These solutions can increase the capacity, efficiency, and flexibility of the grid we already have, often delivering meaningful benefits to consumers on shorter timelines and at lower costs than constructing new transmission lines. A modern energy system requires us to consider both new infrastructure and a commitment to making better use of existing assets and this legislation helps us achieve both of those goals.

Building Faster. Speed-to-power has become an increasingly important factor in economic vitality. Businesses making investments across the U.S. need to know not only what electricity will cost, but also whether sufficient power can be delivered when they need it. More predictable timelines, and greater certainty for lawfully approved projects are essential to ensuring American competitiveness. We cannot allow infrastructure constraints to impede growth, forcing businesses to seek other investment opportunities beyond our borders.

These challenges are not abstract federal policy questions. They are reflected in the decisions facing state legislatures, public utility commissions, local communities, and businesses seeking to invest and grow. Whether it is a manufacturing facility considering where to locate, a utility evaluating needed transmission upgrades, or a community concerned about rising electricity costs, the ability to deliver

reliable and affordable power on a predictable timeline has become a critical factor in state and local economic competitiveness.

We also recognize that effective federal reform must work alongside state and local decision-making. States play an essential role in energy planning, infrastructure siting, utility regulation, and consumer protection. At the same time, energy infrastructure increasingly crosses jurisdictional boundaries and the benefits of individual projects often extend well beyond a single state. Federal policy should provide greater certainty, improve that coordination, and address the barriers that individual states cannot resolve alone, while also preserving meaningful opportunities for state leadership and local engagement. We applaud your work to ensure this bill strikes this balance.

Equally important, we appreciate the legislation's attention to energy affordability and consumer protection. Expanding energy supply and transmission capacity, reducing unnecessary infrastructure costs, improving utility planning, and ensuring that large new electricity customers bear an appropriate share of the costs of serving their demand are all important components of a more affordable energy future. Permitting reform must ultimately be measured not simply by how quickly projects receive approval, but by whether we are delivering reliable electricity, controlling costs, and creating greater economic opportunity for American families and businesses.

These issues are also inseparable from our national security. America's ability to maintain technological leadership, expand domestic manufacturing, support critical industries, and strengthen energy security depends on infrastructure capable of delivering reliable and affordable power. We cannot achieve American energy dominance without the infrastructure necessary to produce, move, and deliver that energy.

We recognize that legislation of this scope requires thoughtful consideration of the appropriate balance between timely project development, environmental protections, state involvement, and regulatory accountability. As discussions move forward, we strongly encourage the preservation of the core reforms that provide greater permitting certainty, strengthen transmission planning and development, promote technology-neutral treatment, and improve our ability to deliver infrastructure on the timelines the country requires.

The opportunity before Congress is significant, and the need to act is clear. States cannot be expected to meet growing electricity demand, attract new investment, and protect consumers without a federal framework that allows critical infrastructure to be developed and modernized efficiently.

The bipartisan work reflected in this legislation provides a foundation for addressing challenges that have persisted for decades. We commend your leadership in bringing forward this comprehensive proposal and look forward to working with all those engaged across Congress and in the states to

advance meaningful, durable reforms that strengthen American energy security, support state and local economic growth, and ensure reliable and affordable electricity for generations to come.

Sincerely,

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