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In a markup held June 10, the House Energy and Commerce Committee approved legislation intended to reduce delays in air quality permitting by a vote of 30-19. The legislation sets a number of directives for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to follow when issuing permits for new manufacturing sites.

The Promoting New Manufacturing Act (H.R. 4795), introduced by Representative Steve Scalise (R-LA), would delay implementation of any new or revised national ambient air quality standard until the EPA publishes final regulations and guidance for the standard. It would also require the EPA to publish an annual report on the number of preconstruction permits issued, the percentage of permits issued within a year of filing, and the average amount of time it takes for the appeals process to take place, and to report to Congress on delays in issuing preconstruction permits.

Representative Henry Waxman (D-CA) argued that the legislation would allow facilities to ignore safer standards and “gives new polluters amnesty from the applicable air quality standards.” Committee Chairman Fred Upton (R-MI) emphasized that the legislation would cause fewer permitting delays and faster adoption of new guidelines, resulting in more investment in energy infrastructure and manufacturing.

The legislation may move to the full House for further consideration.

Sources: E&E News, House Energy and Commerce Committee
