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## Bicameral push would give DOI discretion over pipeline permits through national parks

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Members of the House and Senate have introduced bills that would give the Department of the Interior (DOI) authority over natural gas pipeline permitting on federal lands in lieu of congressional oversight. Current pipeline construction projects can take years to receive congressional approval, with additional waiting time required to obtain DOI permits.

Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA) introduced a bill on May 7 that would amend the Mineral Leasing Act (MLA), while Representatives Tom MacArthur (R-NJ) and Cedric Richmond (D-LA) put forward the “National Energy Security Corridors Act” (H.R. 2295) on May 20. The MLA amendment, co-sponsored by Senators Cassidy, Inhofe (R-OK), and Capito (R-WV), and H.R. 2295 would extend the federal lands covered by MLA to include national parks.

Union leaders and pipeline developers have applauded the efforts in both the House and Senate, which they say will also help states with high electricity prices access more affordable energy.

Tim Spisak, Senior Advisor on Conventional Energy at the Bureau of Land Management, opposed the bill, citing the lack of time for the public to provide input. The Southern Environmental Law Center and other green organizations raised similar concerns.

Rep. Alan Lowenthal (D-CA) said he supported new energy infrastructure but believed congressional oversight and public input were vital to the permitting process.

Source: E&E News

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