Energy Freedom Fund

The pro-freedom case for BAAJA

Bipartisan bills are rarely pro-freedom. BAAJA is an exception, because both leading Democrats and Republicans now recognize that America needs much greater freedom to build.

Both parties now recognize that America needs the freedom to build

- In the last two years, Democrats have become dramatically more interested in increasing the freedom to build—"permitting reform"—which was historically largely a Republican focus.
- Democrats have seen that it's not just fossil fuel projects that are impeded by endless permitting delays, but also solar, wind, battery, and transmission projects they care about.
- Democrats have seen that open-ended Presidential power to reverse permits doesn't just give Biden the power to kill oil projects; it also gives Trump the power to kill wind projects.
- While some Democrats have historically embraced permit delays as a tool to oppose fossil fuels, many now believe fossil fuels can be outcompeted on a level permitting playing field.
- Bipartisan bills are rarely pro-freedom, but BAAJA is an exception because it was negotiated in an environment where both parties had a strong interest in greater freedom.

BAAJA responsibly streamlines permitting for all kinds of projects without any subsidies

- BAAJA limits the abuse of bonus reviews (NEPA) to block projects by years.
- BAAJA limits the abuse of the Clean Water Act to stop the vital, 100% water-safe gas pipelines and power lines our grid needs.
- BAAJA even modestly improves electric transmission by making it easier to build cost-effective projects while somewhat constraining utilities from building wasteful projects.
- BAAJA makes it hard for administrations to reverse permits—which protects lawful solar/wind projects from Trump but also oil/gas permits from a future Democrat President.
- BAAJA, unlike most pieces of legislation, does not add any subsidies.

BAAJA overall improves electricity affordability, reliability, and availability

- BAAJA is by no means an ideal electricity policy, but if we look at its overall effects compared to the status quo it is a big improvement.
- BAAJA addresses the root cause of our electricity problems—lack of reliable supply—by unleashing reliable infrastructure: power plants, gas pipelines, and power lines.
- The most valid criticism of BAAJA from an electricity perspective is that its measures designed to limit wasteful utility transmission spending are not tightly-defined enough.
- But today's limits on wasteful spending are even looser than BAAJA's—while strangling cost-effective transmission and electricity in general.
- Given the options on the table, BAAJA is worth adopting on electricity grounds alone—and an absolute no-brainer given that it also unleashes development throughout the economy.
- Economic freedom-fighters fought successfully last year to de-subsidize intermittent electricity. By fighting for BAAJA they can also unleash electricity—and everything else.