

**Delaware Riverkeeper Network ~ Berks Gas Truth
Food & Water Watch ~ Clean Water Action ~ Beyond Extreme Energy
EarthWorks ~ Catskill Mountainkeeper**

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**People's Hearing Demands Congressional Action on FERC
*Communities from Across America Gather to Protest Rogue Agency***

Washington, DC: Representing communities from across the nation, 65 from across the nation testified to abuses resulting from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) biased review and approval process for natural gas pipelines. The testimony was heard as part of the first-ever national People's Hearing challenging FERC, at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

"The unparalleled gathering here of so many impacted community representatives demonstrates the broad opposition to the abuses of power and law being inflicted by FERC," said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, leader of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and a primary organizer of the event. "Congress needs to investigate how FERC is misusing its authority and to recognize that major changes are necessary to protect people from FERC's abuse of power."

The hearing roster included individuals like Megan Holleran whose family maple-syrup forest was taken by eminent domain and cut down despite the Constitution Pipeline not having all needed approvals and at this point has been stalled/stopped. Also testifying is Spencer Phillips from Key-Log Economics, an expert firm that has documented pipeline projects as costing communities billions of dollars which FERC never considers in its cost analyses.

Said Megan Holleran of her reason for joining the People's Hearing, "I'm testifying at the People's Hearing because FERC must be held accountable for the irreparable damage that they have done to my land, business, and home through the abuse of eminent domain for corporate gain. My family's right to use and protect our own land has been violated by FERC for the sake of William's Corporation's profits and this misuse of power needs to stop. The FERC commissioners need to recognize that their decisions are destroying the lives of real people. "

Spencer Phillips, Ph.D. offered, "When it comes to the pipeline approval process, FERC has two problems that together guarantee the wasteful and unjust result of too many pipelines producing too little value and imposing too high a cost--many billions for every pipeline--on local communities. One problem is that they look at the supposed benefits through rose-colored glasses: uncritically adopting poorly researched and grossly inflated estimates provide by the pipeline applicants themselves. The other problem is that FERC puts on blinders with regard to the staggering economic costs the pipelines would impose on people and communities due to damage to ecosystem function, to increased risks to health and safety, and to degraded aesthetic and recreational quality."

The testimony presented at the People's Hearing demonstrated that FERC misuses the language of the

Natural Gas Act to strip American communities of their legal and constitutional rights, to undermine the rights and authority of states, to ignore the mandates of federal law and other federal agencies, and to strip communities from having full and fair opportunities to participate in the decision-making process around natural pipelines, compressors and LNG export facilities.

The hearing supports a request signed by more than 180 organizations calling on the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee to investigate FERC and to reform the Natural Gas Act.

"The relationship between FERC and the entities it is charged with regulating is frequently characterized as a revolving door, but it's often more of a pipeline that delivers bureaucrats to fossil fuel companies, law firms, and lobbyists eager to receive them. It's a pipeline that is as dirty and dangerous as the ones FERC approves with its rubberstamp. We hope that today's hearing is a wake up call to Congress to shut that pipeline down and address the myriad issues it has caused," said Karen Feridun, Founder of Berks Gas Truth.

"FERC has a revolving-door relationship with the companies it is supposed to regulate. FERC commissioners and staff come from fossil fuel companies and land jobs with them upon leaving the agency. This is why it is widely seen by those who have had to deal with it as a rubber-stamp for industry, particularly the gas industry," said Ted Glick, Co-Founder of Beyond Extreme Energy.

"It's critically important that the people who are most impacted by FERC's actions be heard and, unfortunately, to date our politicians and agency staff have been turning a deaf ear to the frustrations and suffering of impacted communities. We hope that this Hearing provides a much-needed outlet for these communities as well as shining a light on the FERC process," offered Scott Edwards, Co-director Food & Water Justice, Food & Water Watch.

Over 65 individuals testified from 9:30 to 4:30 at the National Press Club in Washington, DC.

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The People's Hearing was organized by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Berks Gas Truth Food & Water Watch, Clean Water Action, Beyond Extreme Energy, EarthWorks, and Catskill Mountainkeeper.

Sponsors of the Peoples Hearing include: People, Not Pipelines; Stop the Algonquin Pipeline; Expansion; Earth Guardians; Freshwater Accountability Project; Advocates for Springfield, NY; Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT); Concerned Citizens for a Safe Environment; Sane Energy Project; Big Bend Conservation Alliance; OVEC; Franciscan Response to Fracking; NorthJersey Pipeline Walkers; We Are Cove Point; South Coast Neighbors United; Halt the Harm; Sierra Club; Responsible Drilling Alliance; NJ Sierra Club; Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN); Waterkeepers Chesapeake; Gas Free Seneca; Seneca Lake Guardian; Complete it Cuomo; Ban the Transport of Fracked Gas; Green America; Virginia River Healers; New Mexico River Healers; Safe Energy Rights Group (SEnRG); Climate Mama; SAPE; Sourland Conservancy; Stop the West Roxbury Lateral Pipeline; Resist the Pipeline; Sustainable Medina County; Interfaith Moral Action on Climate (IMAC); Coalition for Responsible Siting of LNG Facilities; WV Chapter of the Sierra Club; Lancaster Against Pipelines; No Fracked Gas in Mass; Protect Our Water, Heritage, Rights (POWHR); FrackFreeNC Alliance; NC Alliance to Stop the ACP; Mountain Lakes Preservation Alliance; Niagara Sierra Club