

**Berks Gas Truth
Beyond Extreme Energy
Delaware Riverkeeper Network
FERC Vacancies Campaign
Green America**

May 15, 2017

Chairman Lisa Murkowski
Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources

Dear Chairman Murkowski,

On behalf of communities and organizations working in states across the nation who are experiencing direct and repeated abuse from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) misuse of its power to consider natural gas pipelines and infrastructure projects, we urge you to postpone any hearings on President Trump's nominations for FERC Commissioner.

President Trump's unknown personal and professional ties with foreign leaders and foreign corporations raise serious and legitimate concerns for those he would seek to install in these highly consequential positions. FERC's role in protecting the U.S. energy grid is essential to our national security. Recent events regarding President Trump's firing of FBI Director Comey, including his apparent demand for loyalty in how the Director carried out his decisionmaking and activities as head of the FBI, heightens our alarm and concern.

As it currently stands, communities already experience tremendous abuses of power and law at the hands of FERC. As documented in the dossier that can be found at <http://bit.ly/DossierofFERCAbuse>, FERC has misused its power to, among other things:

- ⇒ Support the premature and increasingly expansive use of the power of eminent domain to take private and public property rights in order to advance private corporate gain;
- ⇒ Strip people of their ability to access the courts in order to defend their property, community and environmental rights;
- ⇒ Undermine state's rights;
- ⇒ Overlook damaging violations of environmental and community protection laws;
- ⇒ Ignore the clear mandates of federal laws governing their review and approval process and their obligation to respect the legal authority of other federal agencies and States;

It is imperative that the Senate oppose advancing, and certainly take no steps to expedite, confirmation of the President's nominees to FERC.

Instead, the Senate should prioritize holding Congressional hearings into the abuses of power and law already experienced at the hands of FERC, in order to identify and secure needed reforms. Such reforms should prevent the ongoing abuses experienced today, ensure that when conflicted Commissioners are inappropriately placed into this high office they are no longer able to misuse their authority for their own personal gain, and guarantee that there is a genuine and reasonable mechanism for having them removed for cause when the facts deem it necessary.

Respectfully Requested,

Maya K. van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, Delaware Riverkeeper Network
Lee Stewart, Organizer, Beyond Extreme Energy
Karen Feridun, Founder, Berks Gas Truth
Todd Larsen, Green America
Ted Glick, FERC Vacancies Campaign

Cc:

Ranking Member Maria Cantwell, Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources & All members of the Committee