



For Immediate Release:

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**Press Advance
Environmental Groups To Protest Against
Trump's FERC Nominees and Restoration of a FERC Quorum**

Date: July 20, 2017

Time: 11 am to 3 pm

Place: Three Senate Office Buildings, Washington, DC

Communities from across the nation impacted by natural gas pipelines will bring their message of opposition to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to the Senate on Thursday, July 20, 2017. Representatives of communities harmed by FERC and its abusive process for rubber stamping approval of pipelines will silently, with signs, parade the halls of the Senate on July 20th, protesting FERC and urging senators to hold off voting on President Trump's recent nominations to the Commission in effort to restore the agency's quorum.

Without the required numbers of commissioners for a voting quorum since February, FERC has been prevented from approving any new pipeline infrastructure projects. Protesters are asking the Senate not to vote to approve new Commissioners and to, instead, leave FERC in its legal limbo. Protestors

will be urging, through their signs, that Congress hold hearings into FERC's abuses of power and law, and to enact legislative reforms that will prevent these abuses from continuing.

The coalition also delivered a letter to targeted members of Congress signed by 104 organizations representing communities from across the nation, outlining the legislative reforms of FERC and the Natural Gas Act that are needed to prevent FERC's ongoing abuse.

The letter states:

It is with increasing frequency and growing magnitude, that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is abusing its authority and the law in alarming ways. After three decades of FERC's unaccountable and irresponsible approach to energy development, the trust of the American people has been strained beyond the breaking point. And, to be honest, our trust that Congress wants to fix the problem is withering. We are hopeful that you will prove us wrong and become a champion for the kind of meaningful reform that is truly needed.

We are urging you to lead a call for Congressional hearings into the abuses of power and law being inflicted by FERC....

And we are asking you to champion meaningful reforms that will prevent ongoing and future abuses of power and law by FERC. As it currently stands, the language of the Natural Gas Act is being misused by FERC to deny people of their legal and constitutional rights, to strip the legal authority of states, to undermine the authority of other federal agencies, to ignore the mandates of the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, to trample private property rights, to take from communities the protection of public parks, forests and conserved lands that they have invested heavily in protecting, to take jobs and destroy small businesses, to inflict on our communities health, safety and environmental harms, all for the benefit of a single industry seeking to advance its own corporate profits and business edge over its competitors.

With this letter, we are identifying for you the meaningful reforms that are needed. Recent pronouncements of soft ball legislative proposals will not remedy the abuses communities are suffering. Legislative proposals that are only focused on the public participation process of FERC and not the taking of the judicial, legal, state, property, or environmental rights we have been highlighting is simply not good enough. Soft ball legislative reforms that don't go to the root of the problems we have been alerting you to will not receive our praise or support. A legislative proposal that is not a true legislative fix is an anathema to us.

President Trump has nominated Neil Chatterjee, former energy policy advisor to Mitch McConnell , Robert Powelson, president of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, and announced the nomination of Kevin McIntyre from the law firm of Jones Day known to represent pro-fossil fuel interests, to the FERC commission. FERC requires at least three commissioners to hold a quorum and vote to approve pipeline projects but currently there is only one sitting member, with Powelson and Chatterjee awaiting the Senate vote on their nomination. If accepted, FERC will regain a

quorum and the ability to vote on the multiple pending pipeline projects that have been put on hold since February. There is great pressure from the fossil fuel industry to restore FERC's quorum especially now since energy CEOs are warning that if FERC is not up and running before this August break, they will pull the private funding for the current projects.

The coalition representing residents impacted by FERC recently released a dossier containing thousands of pages of evidence documenting FERC's abuses of power and law, including examples of the agency infringing on property rights, states' rights, peoples' and environmental protection, which can be found online <http://bit.ly/DossierofFERCAbuse>

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Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN) is a nonprofit membership organization working throughout the 4 states of the Delaware River Watershed including Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and New York. DRN provides effective environmental advocacy, volunteer monitoring programs, stream restoration projects, public education, and legal enforcement of environmental protection laws.