

VOICES

Victory Over InFRACKstructure, Clean Energy inStead

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Contact:

Maya K. van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, 215-801-3043
Karen Feridun, Berks Gas Truth, 610-678-7726

FERC Commissioner Powelson Resigns Via Tweet. Pipeline Opponents Applaud, Urge Senate to Learn Its Lesson

Washington, DC: After just 17 months in office, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Commissioner Robert Powelson announced his resignation just before 5 p.m. Wednesday evening, June 28, 2018. His resignation comes as welcome news to community groups and environmental advocates who have been calling on Congress to investigate abuses of power at the Commission.

Powelson was nominated to FERC by Donald Trump and was confirmed by the US Senate, despite widespread community opposition, on August 4, 2017. Powelson's confirmation to FERC helped restore the quorum that was necessary for the agency to resume approving pipelines, a power that had been in abeyance for more than 5 months due to the lack of a quorum.

Members of the national coalition known as VOICES were quick to applaud his leaving, identifying Powelson as being firmly in the camp of the pipeline industry throughout his tenure, and even before when he served on the Pennsylvania PUC. His ties to the industry came into question when, as Chair of the commission,,he refused to recuse himself from consideration of the controversial Mariner East 2 pipeline after publicly endorsing it.

“As a FERC Commissioner, Robert Powelson was part of the FERC Rubber Stamp for pipelines. Powelson was not only a stalwart supporter of pipelines, but he was an outspoken critic of any members of the public who opposed pipelines, likening them to jihadists, ” said **Maya van**

Rossum, leader of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and outspoken member of VOICES. “Communities from across the nation threatened and harmed by FERC fracked gas pipelines urged US Senators to use their power in 2017 to oppose Powelson and or any other Commissioners that would restore the agency’s pipeline approval powers, instead urging Congress to investigate the agency for its abuses of power. The Senators didn’t listen. As a result, since August of 2017, FERC has quickly approved on the order of 27 more pipeline projects, and now more communities are being hurt across the nation and our country is being increasingly locked in to a fossil fuel future that will have devastating climate change impacts. **We urge the Senate to heed our warning, do not make the same mistake. Powelson may be only one Commissioner, but his seat should remain vacant. We don’t need more fossil fuel lackeys in office,” added van Rossum.**

“One year ago, we were meeting with Senators and their staffers to educate them on the abuses of power we’d identified more than a year earlier. Our message to them was to take advantage of the lack of a quorum to do the inquiry we’d been demanding. They failed to act and, as a result, several more pipelines have been approved and damage that could have been avoided has been done. With Powelson’s resignation comes another opportunity for the Senate to do the right thing by refusing to approve any nominee Trump sends them until they have done the long overdue job of protecting communities and our climate from further pipeline proliferation.” said from Pennsylvania. **Karen Feridun, Founder, Berks Gas Truth, member of the VOICES coalition.**

"The move should be shocking, but it's not. He's merely moving from a corporate lobbying firm masquerading as a regulatory agency to a corporate lobbying firm not masquerading as anything. The fact that privatized water can compete with fossil fuels for executive talent is quite telling of where we're headed as climate change sinks in," said **Rosemary Wessel with No Fracked Gas in Mass and an active VOICES coalition member.**

The VOICES coalition includes over 245 organizations working in communities across the nation to challenged FERC fracked gas infrastructure projects.

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