

VOICES

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Thousands Urge Senate to Reject B. McNamee as Next FERC Commissioner

Washington, D.C. – Over 25,000 people are urging members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to reject Bernard McNamee, Donald Trump’s nominee as the next Federal Energy Regulatory Commissioner. Opponents expressed concern about McNamee’s vocal support of fossil fuels, as he expressed in an Earth Day opinion piece printed in *The Hill* where he extolled the virtues of fossil fuels, including fracked gas, and dismissed the power, possibility and values of clean energy solutions. McNamee would fill the vacancy left by former Commissioner Robert Powelson who vacated the seat on August 10, 2018. The request was complemented by an ask that Senators leave the seat vacant and instead encourage congressional hearings investigating the process FERC uses to review and approve interstate natural gas pipeline projects. The VOICES coalition has long expressed concern about FERC’s abuses of its power, detailed in a dossier of evidence demonstrating the abuses. In fact, the Coalition appealed to the Senate last year when Trump filled 4 seats on the Commission, but our concerns were ignored.

The letters and petitions signed by 25,700 US residents, with signatures still coming in, were timed to be received just two days before McNamee’s November 15, 2018, confirmation hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

“President Trump’s nominee to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) -- Bernard McNamee -- is obviously part of a plan to ram through more fossil fuels when we can no longer afford them. And FERC's Republican majority is clearly complicit,” said **Drew Hudson, founder of 198 methods**. “Trump’s political allies are trying to sneak through this appointment at “warp speed” without due consideration of its lasting impact on our climate or communities. While we think any nominee is a bad idea -- because FERC is a

deeply flawed agency that must be torn down and remade before we can make real progress towards solving the climate crisis -- we also believe that McNamee is a horrible choice to be a FERC commissioner and we're telling all Senators to vote NO on his nomination."

"FERC is given tremendous power to approve and advance pipelines. Rather than carefully considering the impacts of pipeline proposals, FERC has focused its energy on finding ways to undermine the ability of states and the public to legitimately question and challenge projects. The system is broken and FERC has turned into a demonstrably biased and abusive agency in need of investigation and reform," said **Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, leader of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and leading member of the VOICES coalition**. "It is time for members of the U.S. Senate who are concerned about FERC's failure to consider the climate change impacts of the fracked gas pipelines it is rampantly approving; who are concerned about the Commission's misuse of the power of eminent domain; and who recognize that the agency has a demonstrated bias in favor of the fossil fuel industry that needs to be addressed, to stand firm against the confirmation of Donald Trump's latest FERC Commissioner nominee until the agency has been reviewed and needed reforms to the agency's process have been identified and put in place by Congress through the Natural Gas Act reform."

"Bernard McNamee has spent his career promoting the interests of the fossil fuel industry. His preposterous Earth Day op-ed was written during his 4 months as the Director of Life:Powered, an initiative of the Texas Public Policy Foundation. The Foundation is a right-wing "non-profit" with donors like Exxon Mobil and The Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation and a board of directors that is a rogue's gallery of industry insiders and others who would like to "reframe the discussion about energy sources." The members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources committee cannot possibly approve McNamee with straight faces if their intentions are to see the public's interests served, even a little, and to take climate change at all seriously," said **Karen Feridun, Founder of Berks Gas Truth, another coalition member**.

"This past year has seen an increase in state regulators blocking or delaying gas infrastructure in defiance of FERC. We've also seen the federal courts rule against FERC in cases like the Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley pipelines," said **Shane Capra, an organizer with Beyond Extreme Energy**. "There have also been many more dissents by the two Democratic members of FERC, but they have been outvoted by the Republican majority. That's why BXE is working to expand the cracks within FERC, by opposing and delaying as long as possible the Trump nomination of Bernard McNamee. Last month we dressed as supervillains and visited many members of the Senate committee expressing, tongue in cheek, our support for McNamee, a fellow supervillain ([Video Here](#)). And we'll be

back, in person, to welcome Senators to McNamee's Senate hearing on November 15, and demand they follow through by opposing this radical nominee.

"With McNamee, the worst practices of FERC would be enhanced," said **Green America executive co-director, Todd Larsen**. "McNamee's record demonstrates that he would promote fossil fuels at the expense of renewable energy sources that protect the planet and save consumers money and would work to accelerate FERC's already disastrous policies around pipeline and infrastructure approvals. The American public overwhelmingly supports renewable energy and there is increasing opposition to pipelines from a broad and growing coalition of people – liberal and conservative – nationwide. The Senate needs to take note and hold hearings into FERC's abuses before appointing anyone as Commissioner, and then needs to appoint a Commissioner that will put the needs of people ahead of profits."

"On a positive note, if the Senate confirms McNamee, the House's oversight staffers will have yet more work in sorting out how deeply the fossil fuel industry has embedded itself into McNamee. Investigate, subpoena, lather, rinse, repeat," adds **RL Miller of Climate Hawks Vote**, who also partnered with VOICES on the petition.

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