

## **NORTHEAST DIRECT PF14-22**

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My name is Stephanie Scherr, the founder of ECHO Action NH. I have a master's degree in Environmental Science and Communications and I'm a certified science educator. I feel that I now have an honorary degree in community organizing, social media storming and political lobbying.

I live in Southern NH where Kinder Morgan tried to literally blast their way through the Granite State in relentless pursuit of the Northeast Energy Direct (NED) pipeline. The pipeline would have transported fracked gas through a 32" pipeline from the Marcellus Shale deposit through pristine wetlands, woodlands, aquifers and fragile wildlife habitat. Historic homes, a church and an elementary school were all within the incineration zone.

The antics of the Blue Man Group, Kinder Morgan, had us begging FERC to halt scoping hearings as the pipeline route kept changing, adding more affected land owners. While we frantically searched maps and located the newly impacted land owners, Kinder Morgan published reports with thousands of "to be determined" labels, apparently acceptable to FERC. It was like signing a blank check and hoping not to have your account drained.

Kinder Morgan's people would swoop into communities like vultures, negotiating deals with uninformed citizens and towns promising lucrative deals or perks like a fire truck and pressuring citizens with promises of safety. We didn't buy it.

When Kinder Morgan uploaded a draft of their Environmental Report on a Friday afternoon, leaving just days to sort through the enormous document before scoping, land owners called FERC. Their calls were met with incredibly rude, disrespectful, condescending responses.

The following comments were made by FERC employees **Sarah McKinley** &

**Marcia Lurensky** at the **FERC Landowner Helpline** to NED pipeline affected landowners.

Sarah told one caller, "Compressor stations are just big chemical plants. There is no pollution. I don't know what you're worried about. I have worked on gas pipelines for FERC for over 30 years and never heard the term blowdown. You have been sold a bill of goods. You need to get off YouTube!" Then she hung up. This was the second person at FERC to tell her blowdowns do not exist.

Sarah told another caller, "You and your folks can take as long as you want to process and digest this information. You do not need it for scoping. Your FERC comments sent in to us are the same as testifying at scoping. Kinder Morgan pushed your buttons and there's no need for your buttons to be pushed."

A caller who spoke to Marcia stated, "Not one of my questions have been answered. She's beating around the bush. She wouldn't stop talking until I told her that it was my turn to talk now. She tried to tell me that there would be no tariffs on our electric bill, that the noise wouldn't be THAT disruptive, and that any information that I may get from protest groups is biased."

Marcia told another caller that she talks to Kinder Morgan on the phone. They're wonderful people. They don't want to hurt anyone. She said that she'd be at work until 7:00 tonight "donating her time to FERC" talking to people to make them feel better. She was told she should not be so upset.

**Believe me, this kind of response doesn't make anyone feel better.**

Living in NH has afforded me the opportunity to speak with many presidential candidates. I told Jeb Bush he was standing in a community fighting the NED pipeline and asked if he'd give back the \$2M he received from his friend Richard Kinder of Kinder Morgan or call for a no-build of the NED pipeline. Without flinching, he said, "neither". He incorrectly told us pipeline siting is a local issue.

C-Span filmed me telling Hillary Clinton that I had concerns about the oil & gas industry backed FERC and that when candidates came through the region, they would incorrectly tell us pipeline permitting is a local issue. I asked what she could do to help us, She said FERC doesn't pay enough attention to local issues. I followed up again stating that FERC is funded by the fossil fuel industry. She said "no" and went on to explain why I was wrong. People running for the highest office in the land often don't know or deny the connections between FERC and the fossil fuel pushers. Everyone's in on the game and we're the pawns.

The FERC game is rigged to promote old, outdated, filthy energy technology. The leaks in existing pipelines need to be sealed and FERC needs to put the brakes on the desperate push for pipelines as the industry panics, fearing the end of the fossil fuel era.

The public outcry and increasing activism is empowering. STANDING ROCK will have far-reaching impacts and we stand in solidarity with the First Nations who have been unjustly impacted.

Hillary Clinton sold fracking to the world and FERC helped her cover our nation in explosive, leaking, polluting, chronic illness, disease and death causing fossil fumes. When Sarah McKinley said we should get off YouTube, she meant we should stop watching videos FLIR cameras that document unseen toxic methane leaks, incineration zones, explosions, tap water and rivers bubbling with fracked gas and families.

We will not allow FERC and the fossil fuel industry to intimidate us and to cover up the greatest tragedy of our time. Exxon knew, BP knew, Shell knew. The all knew, and you know what? FERC knew. FERC does not take climate and health impacts into account when siting pipelines. We want FERC to know, that we know, there is no safe place for them.

We value clean air, clean water, wildlife, scenic vistas, outdoor recreation, state parks, conservation lands, historic homes and small town culture. The environmental racism that favors pipelines through rural communities or depressed urban areas is unjust and abusive. I had the opportunity to personally thank Bernie Sanders for being the only presidential candidate to oppose the NED pipeline. All others seem to be on board with the frackus quo.

We have clean energy solutions already in use, exploding in popularity. The energy field labor force already possesses the skills to transition to safer, healthier, clean energy jobs with bright futures. In surpassing 400 ppm CO<sub>2</sub>, we have reached a critical point and FERC needs more than revision, they need to completely change their direction to siting only renewable energy projects. The United States is embarrassingly behind other nations. The world is watching and we can't wait for FERC to come around to the realities of the climate emergency we are already facing.