



For Immediate Release

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**Friends of Nelson Joins 181 Organizations from 35 States Calling for
Congressional Review of FERC**

Hundreds of Nonprofit Organizations Join to Demand Reform of Rogue Agency

Washington, DC – Friends of Nelson has joined with [more than 180](#) organizations representing communities across America called on leaders in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and House Energy and Commerce Committee to hold congressional hearings into the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission’s (FERC) extensive history of bias and abuse. The groups are also requesting reform of the Natural Gas Act, which the groups say, gives too much power to FERC and too little to state and local officials.

“The time has now come for Congress to investigate how FERC is using its authority and to recognize that major changes are in fact necessary in order to protect people, including future generations, from the ramifications of FERC’s misuse of its power and implementation of the Natural Gas Act,” says Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, leader of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and a primary organizer of the effort.

The letter to Chairman Fred Upton (R-MI), Chairwoman Lisa Murkoski (R-AK), Ranking Member Frank Pallone (D-NJ) and Ranking Member Maria Cantwell (D-WA), signed by 182 community organizations representing communities in 35 states of Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware,

Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, West Virginia as well as the District of Columbia, argues that FERC's review and approval process for jurisdictional pipeline projects is infected by bias; and that it is resulting in uncontrolled and irresponsible proliferation of unneeded natural gas pipelines. Finally, the letter charges the agency with misusing provisions in the law to strip people and states of their legal rights, to prevent fair public participation in the pipeline review process, and to improperly use the power of eminent domain to take private property and public lands in a way that inflicts unforgivable harm to rights, jobs, and communities.

"FERC has no plan for our energy future except to facilitate permits for its energy partners," said Ernie Reed, President of Friends of Nelson. "Dominion's Atlantic Coast Pipeline and the Mountain Valley Pipeline are just two examples of dangerous and unnecessary pipelines that FERC wants to fast track."

Other regional groups endorsing the letter include the Allegheny Blue Ridge Alliance, Friends of Buckingham, Wild Virginia, Free Nelson, Climate Action Alliance of the Valley, the Augusta County Alliance, Appalachian Voices, the Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition, the Pipeline Education Group of Nelson County, the Potomac Riverkeeper Network and Southern Shenandoah Chapter of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club.

The letter details how FERC has implemented the Natural Gas Act in ways that deliberately undermine public input. FERC has prevented communities from challenging projects before the exercise of eminent domain and pipeline construction, made decisions to benefit its Commissioners, and used conflicted consultants to handle much of the review process.

In addition to calling for hearings into FERC and the Natural Gas Act, the letter opposes any further advancement of language in the Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2016 meant to shorten critical pipeline review periods. Signers of the letter argue that the proposed law should be held in abeyance until after the hearings, where Congress will learn “how people’s rights, state’s rights, and the environment are already being abused under the implementation of the Natural Gas Act and so will be further harmed by passage of provisions proposed in the new law.”

Upon Congressional review, DRN and fellow parties demand the reforms necessary to address FERC’s extensive abuse of power, which requires revising the Natural Gas Act to prevent the misuse and exploitation that has been rampant. Additionally, the organizations seek affirmative action to remedy FERC’s problematic funding structure.

“It is a new day and a new way as citizens come together to say enough is enough,” said Chad Oba, with Friends of Buckingham. “There is purpose and dedication in our resolve and we won't stop until our voices are heard and our right to live in health and freedom from corporate interests is restored.”

"The number of frack gas pipelines is exploding and the feds are not only not applying appropriate oversight, but are in fact also enabling the trampling of people's property rights, public health standards, and environmental protection," said David Pringle, NJ Campaign Director, Clean Water Action. “This letter is a clarion call to action for Congress to rein in this modern day Wild West that if left unchecked will lead to even worse abuses and explosions.”

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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.