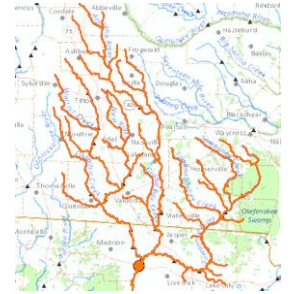


WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc.
the WATERKEEPER® Alliance Affiliate for the upper
Suwannee, Withlacoochee, and Alapaha Rivers
a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charity
PO Box 88, Hahira, GA 31632
850-290-2350
wwalswatershed@gmail.com
www.wwals.net
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For Immediate Release

WWALS and 182 Organizations from 35 States Call for Congressional Review of FERC

Hundreds of Nonprofit Organizations Join to Demand Reform of Rogue Agency

Washington, DC, September 21, 2016 – [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.

“A prime example of FERC’s dereliction of duty to the public benefit is the Sabal Trail fracked methane pipeline Spectra Energy is drilling through Alabama, Georgia, and Florida and under our Withlacoochee River in Georgia and our Suwannee River in Florida,” says John S. Quarterman, president of WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc. (WWALS), the Waterkeeper® Affiliate for the upper Suwannee River. He added, “FERC failed in its due diligence by opaque selection of environmental contractors, by issuing its permit before permits from two states and the Army Corps, by ignoring copious new geological and other evidence, and by giving Sabal Trail construction go-ahead while a lawsuit is still pending by Flint Riverkeeper, Sierra Club, Gulf Restoration Network, and others, including construction through properties whose landowners have not even had eminent domain compensation hearings. Most egregiously, despite FPL, the source of the \$3 billion for this boondoggle, admitting in its 2016 Ten Year Plan that Florida needs no new electricity until 2024 at the earliest, FERC refuses to even reconsider the alleged “need” for this unnecessary, destructive, and hazardous pipeline. Corporate profits for Spectra Energy from Houston, Texas and Enbridge from Calgary, Alberta are no justification for taking local land and risking our water, air, taxes, and safety.”

[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 is corrupt and needs to be reformed," said Paul L Gierosky, cofounder, Coalition to Reroute Nexus. "The evidence is overwhelming and clear as is set forth in the request for Congressional Hearings. It is time for Congress to hold FERC accountable."

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."

Quarterman of WWALS added, "FERC ignores half a dozen liquid natural gas (LNG) export operations in Florida, right where the Sabal Trail pipeline chain goes, which were authorized by the Department of Energy's Office of Fossil Energy (FE). Passing the buck to FE is no excuse for FERC violating its statutory mandate in Section 3 of the Natural Gas Act, which states:"

"no person shall export any natural gas from the United States to a foreign country or import any natural gas from a foreign country without first having secured an order of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) authorizing it to do so."

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, 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."

About WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc. (WWALS)

WWALS Watershed Coalition (WWALS) is the Waterkeeper® Alliance Affiliate for the upper Suwannee River. WWALS, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit membership organization, advocates for conservation and stewardship of the Withlacoochee, Willacoochee, Alapaha, Little, and Upper Suwannee River watersheds in south Georgia and north Florida through education, awareness, environmental monitoring, and citizen activities.

About Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN)

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.

Contact:

John S. Quarterman, President
WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc. (WWALS)
229-242-0102
wwalswatershed@gmail.com
wwals.net
PO Box 88, Hahira, GA 31632

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