



To: House Energy and Commerce Committee, Subcommittee on Energy  
CC: Chairman Bobby L. Rush, Ranking Member Fred Upton

RE: June 12 Hearing on “Oversight of FERC: Ensuring Its Actions Benefit Consumers and the Environment”.

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Thank you for scheduling today’s hearing on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). This is, to my knowledge, the first Congressional hearing on FERC in years, though advocates and impacted citizens have been crying out for justice, congressional investigations and a dramatic restructuring of FERC for years.

We appreciate you taking time to hold this hearing, and to focus on the climate impacts of FERC’s policies. We also hope that this will not be the last hearing on FERC this subcommittee or the Energy and Commerce Committee hold: the coalition of pipeline fighters, climate justice advocates, farmers and impacted citizens we work with would appreciate the opportunity to tell you their side of the story as well. And I think you will not be surprised that people whose lives, businesses and health have been ruined by FERC have a very different and less bloodless story to tell about the impacts of issues like “climate impact analysis” “grid resilience” and “energy storage and capacity.”

FERC is a rubber stamp agency that has rejected only two applications out of more than 400 proposed natural gas pipelines/infrastructure projects in the last 30 years. As I mentioned, protests at FERC and their approved projects have become increasingly common – I myself recently climbed two stories up a ladder to drop a banner from FERC’s awning this spring to demand Congress change FERC into FREC, the Federal Renewable Energy Commission, as part of a Green New Deal.

**Why are we demanding changes and accountability from FERC?** Fracking contaminates water, poisons the air and land, leads to earthquakes and leaks methane, which is up to 80 times more damaging to our climate than carbon dioxide. This pollution is a direct result of the permits FERC issues, and you will hear testimony today from Commissioners who agree that FERC is not doing enough to consider the upstream and downstream impact of the projects they review.

I will direct you to two recent reports that underline the seriousness of this issue, and the need for immediate Congressional intervention:

First, the new report Fracking Endgame from Food and Water Watchfinds<sup>1</sup> that more than 700 new natural gas power plants, petrochemical plants & LNG export terminals have been proposed, planned or built to capitalize on skyrocketing fracked gas production. With just 12 years left to transition to 100 percent clean, renewable energy, we need to keep fossil fuels in the ground and build a just transition as fast as we can. But if the frackers get their way, it's game over for a stable climate. It's them or us.

Second, the new report "Burning the Gas 'Bridge Fuel' Myth: Why Gas Is Not Clean, Cheap, or Necessary" from Oil Change International provides five clear reasons gas is not a bridge fuel to a safe climate:<sup>2</sup>

1. Gas breaks the carbon budget;
2. Coal-to-gas switching doesn't cut it;
3. Low-cost renewables can displace coal & gas;
4. Gas isn't essential for grid reliability;
5. New gas infrastructure locks in emissions.

But despite the mounting evidence that Gas is a climate disaster, the Trump Administration's has been issuing Executive Orders and EPA guidance that make it clear they intend to override state objections to new fossil fuel infrastructure.<sup>3</sup>

Some FERC commissioners, especially Richard Glick, have been raising objections.<sup>4</sup> But this has not stopped approvals from being issued - primarily because Commissioner LaFleur has failed to live up to her professed concern for the climate and voted to approve projects even as she raises objections.

And the issue has become sharply more partisan and political in the last few weeks: After FERC approved another gas export terminal in the Gulf of Mexico, Rick Perry and the Department of Energy put out a statement praising fracked gas as "molecules of Freedom."<sup>5</sup> While that was so stupid it's hilarious, it wasn't satire. This is the actual policy of the United States Department of

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[https://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/news/fracking-endgame-its-literally-us-or-frackers?ms=faws\\_np\\_06042019\\_literally-us-or-frackers](https://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/news/fracking-endgame-its-literally-us-or-frackers?ms=faws_np_06042019_literally-us-or-frackers)

<sup>2</sup> <http://priceofoil.org/2019/05/30/gas-is-not-a-bridge-fuel/>

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<https://www.commondreams.org/news/2019/06/07/following-trumps-executive-order-epa-moves-limit-states-ability-block-dirty-energy>

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<https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2019/5/22/18631994/climate-change-renewable-energy-ferc>

5

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/may/29/energy-department-molecules-freedom-fossil-fuel-rebranding>



Energy. And the very next day Acting FERC Chair Neal Chatterjee tweeted his support and made a statement to the press about how he has always supported gas exports at any cost.<sup>6</sup>

You could chalk it all up to another corrupt Trump nominee, but with FERC overseeing dozens of applications for new gas pipelines and export terminals, Chairman Chatterjee's comments are not just impolitic, they represent a direct erosion of FERC's independence and decision making capacity. If an idea as dumb as "freedom gas" is driving decisionmaking at FERC, what hope does our climate and collective future have? How can a man who swears fealty to the most base and self-dealing parts of the Trump administration serve faithfully as chair of an independent commission with so much power over our collective energy future?

We should be clear what expanded fracking and export of fracked gas means: increasing gas exports means increased fracking and pipelines, which means more cancer, more earthquakes, more explosions, more eminent domain seizures enforced by armed federal officers. It means people die, and get hurt, and treaties get violated, and women disappear or are murdered. That's what it means, that's the consequence of this.

**I am also enclosing more than 3,000 messages and comments for you gathered in just the last 24 hours.** We ask you to ask Commissioners hard questions about those two new reports. You can find all 3,076 names, and read their comments and questions for FERC at: [http://bit.ly/FERCmessages6\\_12\\_19](http://bit.ly/FERCmessages6_12_19)

Here is the message we have all signed on to:

*To: Energy Subcommittee, House Energy and Commerce Committee*

*Thank you for scheduling today's hearing on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).*

*FERC is a rubber stamp agency that has rejected only two applications out of more than 400 proposed natural gas pipelines/infrastructure projects in the last 30 years. Fracking contaminates water, poisons the air and land, leads to earthquakes and leaks methane, which accelerates dangerous climate change.*

*Now is the moment for Congress to act: According to new research, more than 700 new natural gas power plants, petrochemical plants & LNG export terminals have been proposed, planned or built to capitalize on skyrocketing fracked gas production.*

*Another recent report provides five clear reasons gas is not a bridge fuel to a safe climate:*

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<https://www.utilitydive.com/news/chatterjee-rejects-criticism-of-violating-fercs-neutrality-with-use-of-fr/556057/>



- 1 Gas breaks the carbon budget
- 2 Coal-to-gas switching doesn't cut it
- 3 Low-cost renewables can displace coal & gas
- 4 Gas isn't essential for grid reliability
- 5 New gas infrastructure locks in emissions

*The Trump Administration's recent Executive Orders and EPA guidance make it clear they intend to override state objections to new fossil fuel infrastructure - making this an even more urgent situation that requires Congressional oversight.*

*Please ask FERC's commissioners about these new reports, their record of approving climate-wrecking gas projects, and demand accountability for the American people.*

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Hudson', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Hudson,  
Founder, 198 methods