

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 17, 2021

The Honorable Richard Glick, Chairman
The Honorable James Danly, Commissioner
The Honorable Allison Clements, Commissioner
The Honorable Mark Christie, Commissioner
The Honorable Willie Phillips, Jr., Commissioner
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street North East
Washington, DC 20426

Dear Chairman Glick and Commissioners Danly, Clements, Christie, and Phillips:

We write to thank you for actions taken this year by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to address concerns raised by landowners, state, local, and Tribal governments, community groups, and other stakeholders regarding the Commission's review of natural gas infrastructure projects.

Specifically, we applaud the establishment of the Office of Public Participation (OPP) and the appointment of Elin Katz as its inaugural director. The OPP is more than 40 years overdue and is vital to ensuring that the public has the information, tools, and funding necessary to participate in Commission proceedings.

As the Commission works to develop the OPP, it should work quickly to introduce reforms that will immediately improve the stakeholder experience. Many reforms were raised in comments filed with the Commission earlier this year in Docket AD21-9.

These include:

- **Overhauling the FERC website and increasing accessibility for the general public:** Reforming the Commission's website is a critical component of improving public engagement. Commenters described the website as "nearly unusable," "cumbersome and confusing," and "impossible to [use] without knowing the docket number," which cannot easily be found.
- **Shifting outreach responsibilities to the OPP:** Currently, the Commission outsources initial outreach to affected landowners to the project applicant—a clear conflict of interest. The OPP should become the primary agent responsible for engaging with affected landowners, to ensure that they receive clear notice of a Commission proceeding and that they are fully informed of their rights. The OPP should also develop templates for intervening and filing comments in proceedings, and for seeking rehearing of adverse Commission orders.

- **Educating the public:** The Commission’s work is technical in nature and unfamiliar to most people. The OPP should work to develop webinars that outline the Commission’s responsibilities in citizen-friendly language, as well as bullet-point summaries of major Commission orders and rulemakings. The new OPP staff should also be trained to offer technical assistance to affected landowners and other stakeholders, and should consider how this information can be disseminated to all affected, including those without access to the internet or those that speak another language other than English.
- **Engaging with the public:** The new OPP staff should consider engaging in an initial listening tour in regions of the country disproportionately affected by pipeline siting (e.g., in Appalachia and the Gulf of Mexico) and subsequently hire field staff who can be embedded in those communities. Staff should also consider methods to maintain long-term engagement with local groups that represent the interests of affected residents.
- **Establishing an intervenor compensation framework:** Participating in Commission proceedings can be expensive. The Commission should act quickly to create an intervenor compensation framework, as already permitted by Section 319 of the Federal Power Act.

We support efforts that encourage public transparency and responsible development of natural gas pipelines and urge the Commission to continue on its current path of review and reform.

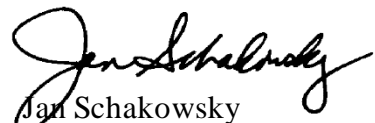
Sincerely,



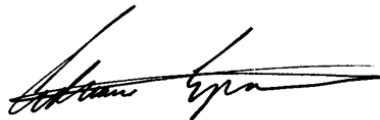
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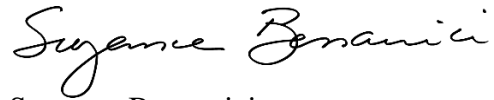
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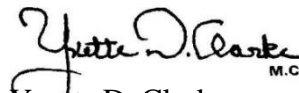
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