

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

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**Opening Statement**  
**Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney**  
**Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties**  
**“Pipelines Over People: How FERC Tramples Landowner Rights in Natural Gas Projects”**  
**December 9, 2020**

Good morning. First, I would like to thank Chairman Raskin for convening this hearing, and I commend him for all the work his Subcommittee has done on this important issue.

**There is a growing consensus among landowners, advocates, courts, and even some FERC Commissioners that FERC’s process is not fair to landowners.**

In 2017, the Center for Public Integrity and State Impact Pennsylvania undertook a comprehensive investigation into FERC. The investigation involved more than 100 interviews and reviews of FERC records for almost 500 pipelines. They found that “at every turn, the agency’s process favors pipeline companies.”

**The Subcommittee’s investigation supports this finding. As Chairman Raskin mentioned, the investigation revealed that FERC has a near-100% approval rate for pipelines. At the same time, however, FERC denied every single landowner appeal over the last twelve years.**

The FERC process can also be quite confusing for landowners who have never dealt with this kind of matter before. FERC Commissioner Richard Glick has called on the Commission to “redouble its efforts to accommodate landowners as they try to navigate the sometimes byzantine set of rules and regulations that can make up a FERC proceeding.”

This issue presents an excellent opportunity for bipartisanship. Bill Gow is a landowner in Douglas County, Oregon in the pathway of the Jordan Cove project. Describing his opposition to big pipeline companies and the FERC process, Mr. Gow said, “I have been a Republican for 45 years; I’m as conservative as they come. The Republican Party was built on private property rights....this is one of our core issues.”

He called on Republicans to stand up for the little guy—for the folks in poor rural counties who may not have the resources to fight big pipelines.

Well, we are answering that call today, and I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join Chairman Raskin in his fight to restore balance and fairness to the FERC pipeline process.

I understand the Chairman is working on legislation to restore that balance. I offer my assistance and endorsement for these efforts. I find it particularly appalling that they are able to take a person's property from them while there is an appeal pending – even before the appeal is even heard and a decision has been made they are taking people's property. This is unfair and unjust. I am so proud of the Chairman for working on a solution should FERC not through their own administrative process make it fair – that by legislation we make it fair for the American people.

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