

My name is David Pringle and I am the NJ Campaign Director for Clean Water Action.

Wow! We're not even a third of the way through this hearing, which is just a fraction of all that is out there, the people and testimony - I'm humbled and empowered!

I'd also like to note a special appreciation and shout out to Delaware Riverkeeper Maya van Rossum who's passion and effective leadership is 2nd to none, and Ted Glick who's been literally laying it on the line non-stop beginning with Vietnam War protests decades ago and most recently, and applicable to today, participating in a multi-week hunger strike at FERC last year and being arrested for a sit in against the Dakota Access Pipeline last month.

My personal focus is New Jersey but Clean Water Action's a national group, though unlike most when we have to make tough choices, our focus is on the states and grassroots not DC. It's great we have 14-15 states as announced here today but we really have many more than that. Clean Water Action is fighting FERC and fracking in many states, some not mentioned here today, including frack central states like California, Colorado, Michigan and Texas. I bet others here can say the same and it's safe to say all states are represented here today.

For most of the past 30 years in New Jersey, I've been fighting a bad fossil fuel projects as they popped up no more than 1 at a time, often years in between each battle. That's changed drastically over the past 10 years. Now we're fighting several at a time non-stop. New Jersey is the most densely populated state, the 3rd smallest and we're currently fighting 5 major dirty, dangerous fossil fuel transport projects – a gas and three oil pipelines in every corner of the state and an oil bomb train network that runs the length and width of the state.

That experience really hits home what you've already heard and will here more of today - - FERC has consistently abused its power. Objectivity has clearly become impossible for FERC. FERC's conflicts of interest are so blatant they rival President-elect Trump's. I'd like to emphasize 3 areas that others today are going in to more detail on.

1) Third party contractors have been shown to have financial ties to the projects they are contacted to review for environmental impacts. For example, NRG was hired by FERC to review the Atlantic Bridge pipeline, which is physically and financially attached to both the Algonquin and PennEast pipelines, even though NRG owns a 10% stake in PennEast.

2) FERC Commissioners refuse to recuse themselves when reviewing projects that their own spouses have financial stakes in. Former FERC Commissioner Phillip Moeller was permitted, over the course of his ten years on the Commission, to rule on matters concerning companies his wife and her firm represented. The exact number of matters is unclear, but that is to be expected. One cannot expect a commissioner that abuses power with such recklessness to keep strict records of instances of that abuse.

3) Employees, so-called "regulators", use a revolving door between FERC and Industry. How fair can the regulatory process be when former FERC employees at the center of the pipeline approval process are now working for industry, and FERC employees are former industry staffers?

So FERC's a poster child for the swamp to drain. Today's hearing is just the tip of the iceberg, barely scratching the surface revealed by investigative reports by E & E News and Desmog blog, proving beyond a reasonable doubt that too many commissioners, their family members and employees, contractors, and those they regulate have lost, if they ever had, any sense of independence - a wholly-owned subsidiary of the gas industry, really a conglomerate - a revolving door where industry hires, dare I say owns, commissioners, employees, independent contractors, and their family members who combined serve as judge, jury and executioner with the public and the environment victims."

There's so much more I'd like to talk about, but others will cover and my time is up, e.g., how FERC is 1) taking public land, and our land, for private gain at ridiculous corporate profit and incredible environmental harm, and 2) turning powerful public testimony into meaningless secret testimony as I've personally experienced on Penn East.

It's also clear FERC is a bully, much like Governor Christie, but it eventually backfires. Christie is now the least popular, with the worst legacy, of any modern New Jersey Governor. And FERC is feeling the same kind of pressure. Actually I'm kind of disappointed but not surprised that FERC/industry isn't here today on a hunger strike or some other protest.

President-elect Trump if you take him at his word will try the Christie approach on steroids, but he will suffer the same fate if he tries. They say rubber bullets, water cannons, and attack dogs, we shall overcome! They say roll back, we say fight back!