



FRAUD ON THE FERC DOCKET

I am Paul L. Gierosky, cofounder of The Coalition to Reroute Nexus (CoRN). CoRN germinated in Medina County, Ohio in late 2014. Nexus is a proposed 36" diameter 250 mile long natural gas export pipeline, a joint venture of Houston-based Spectra Energy and Michigan-based DTE, designed to carry 1.5 billion cubic feet per day of Utica and Marcellus shale gas through Ohio and Michigan to Canada.

The Mission of our organization has been to persuade Nexus to take a more southerly route largely avoiding the densely populated counties of northeastern Ohio already well-served by natural gas supplies and infrastructure.

The latest tactic employed by Nexus in consort with the Consumers Energy Alliance (CEA), an energy industry front group, is the use of fraudulent comment letters filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to sway public opinion in favor of the Project.

This occurred between August 10th and August 23rd of this year when the docket was inundated with letters from residents of Michigan and Ohio unaware their identity had been stolen.

One letter allegedly in support of the pipeline came from a man who died in 1998. Another came from a woman who suffers from dementia and whose son said she would have been unable to write such a letter.

It is a federal felony to knowingly make false representations to a federal agency.

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As a result of our investigation we filed complaints with:

- U.S. Department of Energy Office of Inspector General
- EPA Inspector General
- Division of Investigations Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
- U.S. Postal Inspection Service

In addition we filed on the FERC Docket a protest of the submission of falsified DEIS comment statements under CP16-22 at

http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/file_list.asp?document_id=14491227

In its response, the Alliance called our allegations of fraud "wildly overblown." However, the Alliance admitted to filing 347 comment letters after "signatures" were collected by means of robo-calls.

What did FERC do about this? A FERC staffer I spoke with said people who believe their signature was improperly used could file a letter in the docket to refute it, otherwise it would stay. This is another example where FERC's silence is a betrayal of the democratic process. This is an example of allowing Corporate America to dictate the tactics, like so much else found in the FERC process.

We all need to be concerned that the docket is being treated as a ballot box and it is deliberately and fraudulently being stuffed by persons or entities for the purpose of boosting the seeming public support.

After the Alliance admitted to filing these letters of support on the docket, we did some more research. What you found was not surprising.

In 2014, the Alliance's attempt to influence a Wisconsin utility rate case was investigated after 2,500 Wisconsin signers supporting the rate increase were unaware their names were being used.

In April 2016 more than 38,000 individuals submitted letters to the Bureau of Land Management a day before the deadline for comments on the proposed "Venting and Flaring" rule. These letters were orchestrated by the Consumer Energy Alliance.

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The Mission of the **Coalition to Reroute Nexus** is to educate and persuade NEXUS to choose a route that avoids the higher density counties in northeastern Ohio already adequately served with natural gas and infrastructure and the ecologically unique and environmentally sensitive Oak Openings Region in western Ohio.

CEA's recently launched a national campaign, "Pipelines for America," focused on telling consumers about the increasing importance of U.S. energy infrastructure – and how more is needed.

You need to stay vigilant regarding filings on the dockets that affect you, because FERC will not censor or police attempts to influence the proceedings.

Our greatest defense against home-grown tyranny has always been our strength in numbers as a citizenry. It is not important that we see eye-to-eye on every issue but whether we can agree that we should not be treated in such a fashion by our own government.

We could all benefit by uniting our groups and communicating frequently sharing information and strategies. This forum is or should be the beginning of that process.

Paul L Gierosky

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