

Good afternoon, I'm Patty Cronheim of ReThink Energy NJ.
Thank you for holding this hearing today and the opportunity to speak with you.

It's said: It's not knowing *who* is right that's important, but *what* is right and acting on it.

Well.. FERC knows what is right. And yet, they are not acting on it.

| Just this past month, FERC opened **ing** up wholesale power markets to clean energy resources like rooftop solar, and energy efficiency and storage technology. FERC that a clean energy future is within our grasp.

And yet,

FERC continues to abet gas industry abuse. Permitting complex pipeline approvals remain mere checklists, misinformation is often not corrected, and what poses for market competition is often industry self-dealing at the public's expense.

FERC is failing in it's mandate to protect consumers and to objectively assess need for pipeline projects.

Their permit practices increase the risks of overbuilding natural gas infrastructure and ignore clean energy alternatives like safe, locally grown wind and solar.

| The Energy Information Administration, projects that the demand for natural gas in the Mid-Atlantic region will decline to 2025.[TG1][PC2]

And, studies | shows that in NJ, even on the coldest days, we have 55% more | pipeline capacity than needed **to meet peak demand**.[TG3]

And, regional increases in demand for electric can be met through a variety of options, including increased energy efficiency, better demand response and renewable energy.

[TG4]

FERC knows.

[PC5] And yet, unnneeded pipelines proposals abound and get approved.

FERC's overly friendly gas industry policies ~~FERC's current high profit, low risk / low proof of need policy,~~ create the incentive for overbuilding unneeded pipelines

The profits for new pipelines are sky high –14% guaranteed for 15 years.

Based on old, overly high 20 year bond rates., Additionally, FERC grants this high rate of return to pipeline projects that masquerade as high-risk ventures ~~the high 14% rate on equity is often sought fo~~; Pipeline projects that are really low-er-risk, self-dealing projects schemes designed to line shareholder pockets at the expense of ratepayers. .

Far too much weight is given to preliminary pre-file contracts without thoroughly investigating need.

~~masquerading as high-risk projects.~~

And, FERC knows.

An example is the completely unneeded proposed PennEast pipeline, which the NJ Division of Ratepayer Counsel has called “unfair to consumers” and “akin to winning the lottery”.

With the helping hand of FERC, the fossil fuel industry is cashing in on Marcellus shale - making consumers and communities bear all the risks. Make no mistake, the gas industry sees the handwriting on the wall. The

future decentralization of the grid and the rise of renewables is seen as a threat to their bottom lines.

In NJ, natural gas is in competition with new energy technology and our over-reliance on natural gas is not a bridge to anything but our dirty fossil fuel past.

A consequence of this is that in NJ, our carbon emissions are going up not down. We've seen an over 27% increase in carbon emissions from natural gas in just the past 2 years.

FERC needs to stop policies that encourage ~~be wary of~~ overbuilding and insist on encourage arms length contracts.

They need to, and rebuke ~~toward~~ industry claims that there's an infrastructure crisis that only more fossil fuel investments can resolve.

And, they need to to widen their myopic -review of pipelines and compressor stations and adopt first a "do no harm" ranking of energy projects that looks beyond the gas industry to clean energy alternatives.

~~In~~ NJ, people want action.

Two out of three think pipelines threaten New Jersey.

Three quarters say we should meet the goal of 50% renewables by 2030,

and an overwhelming **90%** think investing in renewable energy is important to NJ's health.

FERC needs to stop enabling dirty fossil fuel projects that harm our air, water, properties, health, and safety. The only true need is a clean energy future.

FERC knows. The question now is, will FERC do the right thing and act?