

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 15, 2021

The Honorable Richard Glick
Chairman
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426

Dear Chairman Glick,

As sponsors of the *Public Engagement at FERC Act*, we write to commend the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on the steps you are taking to encourage and facilitate greater public involvement in FERC proceedings as directed by Congress. As the Commission determines how to fulfill its responsibility to coordinate assistance to the public, we encourage you to pay particular attention to providing residential and small commercial energy consumers a strong voice in shaping our nation's energy future.

As one of the lead agencies responsible for developing energy infrastructure and ensuring reliability of the electric grid, FERC has ultimate jurisdiction over the rates and services of the wholesale electricity markets, licensing of non-federal hydro power and the siting and permitting process for natural gas pipelines. The projects considered by FERC significantly influence the energy prices paid by consumers as well as infrastructure development in communities across the nation; therefore, it is important that the public's interests are meaningfully considered.

Congress has made clear the importance of providing opportunities for private citizens to participate in FERC proceedings. The Public Utility Regulatory Policy Act of 1978 authorized FERC to create an Office of Public Participation that would assist public and consumer advocates in intervening with the agency. While the authorization has been in effect for more than 40 years, this office has yet to be created. In response to this significant delay, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260) directed FERC to submit a report to Congress detailing how it will establish and operate the Office of Public Participation.

As you work to establish an organizational structure for this office, we urge the Commission to consider measures included in the *Public Engagement at FERC Act* as a way to further improve public participation and remove technical barriers that may prevent consumers from making their voices heard. Specifically, we request that the Office of Public Participation employ directed outreach methods, such as consultation services and technical assistance, to ensure the interests of residential and small commercial consumers are adequately represented. We further request that the Commission create a Public and Consumer Advocacy Advisory Committee for the office composed of representatives from the national and state-based nongovernmental consumer advocacy community and provide intervenor funding to individuals or small commercial energy consumer groups to encourage their participation in FERC proceedings.

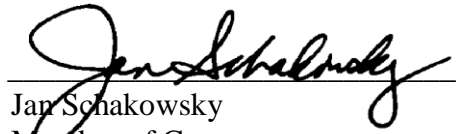
As Federal policies continue to expand FERC's impact on utility bills paid by families and small businesses, it is essential that the public play a more prominent role in decisions made by the Commission. Energy consumers have waited more than 40 years for FERC to create an office to strengthen public involvement and ensure the decisions being made are in the best interest of those who will be most impacted. We hope you will consider the priorities laid out in our legislation and establish the Office of Public Participation without delay.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



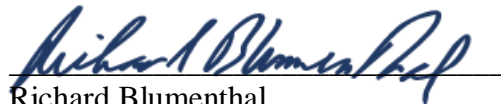
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



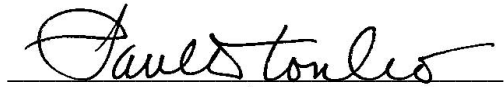
Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



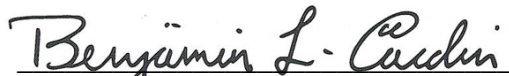
Paul Tonko
Member of Congress



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator