



**Opening Statement**  
**Oversight Hearing on Natural Gas Transportation and Electric Transmission**  
**Chairman Lisa Murkowski**  
**July 12, 2018**

Good morning, everyone. The Committee will come to order.

It was just one month ago today that we conducted an oversight hearing on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the FERC. We had all five Commissioners here, it was good to see them – I don't know, maybe we jinxed the whole thing. But, I think we recognize the value of FERC, they are the key deliberative body under our oversight, they have regulatory responsibility of our nation's crucial midstream, interstate delivery systems that move energy from where it is produced to where it is needed.

Last month's hearing prompted follow-up questions about natural gas transportation and electric transmission, energy systems that are squarely within the core of FERC's jurisdiction. Today we'll have an opportunity to dive more deeply into these issues, which really have a significant impact on our nation's capacity to deliver energy.

After we began planning this hearing, we learned there was going to be another vacancy on the Commission. And while that news did not prompt today's hearing, it certainly underscores the need for us to remain focused on FERC in general and on natural gas transportation and electric transmission, in particular – our lifelines for affordable, clean, diverse, and secure energy.

Today's hearing is also the latest in a series we have held over the last two years, to highlight the significance and outline the benefits of interstate energy delivery infrastructure for our nation. Those benefits include energy affordability and security, along with job creation and economic development. As I see it, there's three common threads run through the entire record we have compiled over the past couple years.

First, that the nation needs more robust energy delivery infrastructure.

Second, thus far private capital and a skilled workforce have been available to expand and upgrade today's energy delivery system assets – but, I underscore 'thus far.'

And the third thread is that energy delivery networks face genuine challenges that threaten to impede progress and thwart delivery system improvements that are otherwise within our reach.

Regulatory uncertainty brought on by delay or, worse, deadlock at FERC, is increasingly of concern. What's more, the denial of necessary state approvals for projects on political grounds, or the failure of other federal agencies to meet FERC-established schedules, are problems that must be addressed.

Our witnesses today include two former FERC Chairmen – one Republican and one Democrat – both of whom remain active leaders in the energy sector, we thank you for that. We're also joined by a leading and very successful energy investor and an experienced practitioner now serving as the General Counsel of the company that, according to his testimony, "owns or operates . . . natural gas pipelines constituting the largest natural gas network in North America."

My main take away from their written testimony is that now more than ever, the United States needs balanced, merits-based energy regulation that is predictable and prompt.

For our country to reap the benefits of the natural gas revolution and renewable power technologies, and to keep our power supply reliable and secure, we must have dependable, financially sustainable, and expanding interstate delivery networks.

Our witnesses can offer informed, bipartisan, and practical observations for building on successes and avoiding regulatory pitfalls. As members consider their testimony, I would hope that they will also ask how our Committee can encourage and assist FERC to move its work along thoughtfully but promptly, and maintain a balanced non-partisan approach to energy law and regulation.

I will introduce each of the panelists after Senator King provides opening remarks on behalf of – well I don't know if they're on behalf of Senator Cantwell, but we welcome you as you are helping lead this committee this morning. Senator King?

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