

*NOTE TO MEDIA: LeClairRyan energy attorney Roy M. Palk is available to comment on stories related to the U.S. energy sector.*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**LECLAIRRYAN ATTORNEY: ‘SHUTTING DOWN FERC’ IS NO OPTION FOR THE U.S.**

*--The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission plays a critical—and often underappreciated—role in the economy, says Roy M. Palk, Senior Energy Industry Advisor for the national law firm.*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (6/22/17) – Critics lambaste the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) as a rubberstamp for pipelines, but re-establishing a quorum on the commission is critical for the entire energy sector—alternative sources included, veteran energy industry attorney Roy M. Palk, Senior Energy Industry Advisor for LeClairRyan, asserts in a June 19 column at *EnergyCentral.com*.

“In fact, FERC’s mandate is quite broad,” writes Palk, who is based in the national law firm’s Glen Allen, Va., office. “It includes, not just the interstate movement of electricity and gas, but also many other issues related to big-picture integration, including grid security and cyber security.”

In the column (“Why ‘Shutting Down FERC’ is No Option for Country”), Palk notes that two FERC nominees largely received a positive reception during their Congressional hearings last month. They were Neil Chatterjee, an energy advisor to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), and Robert Powelson, former chair and current member of the Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission and also president of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners.

However, the nominees’ treatment by anti-pipeline activists was another matter, Palk writes. “Whether their concerns are climate change, water pollution or anything in between, environmental activists continue to protest what they see as FERC’s predisposition to approve pipeline projects,” he explains. . . “During the hearings by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, four chanting protesters were actually arrested for the disruptions they created.”

But Palk believes the protestors’ chants to “Shut FERC Down!” are misguided.

“I am a big fan of solar, wind, biogas and other forms of alternative energy,” he notes in the column. “At the same time, however, it is important to recognize that a diverse energy portfolio is the best approach for the country, in terms of jobs, economic growth, affordability and grid-stability ... even those states seeking to move away from fossil fuels as quickly as possible cannot do so without a well regulated and integrated system. We are all in this together.”

FERC has been stalled since February when Chairman Norman Bay resigned with two existing vacancies on the 40-year-old panel. On top of that, another commissioner recently announced plans to depart FERC at the end of June.

For the energy sector, Palk notes, those vacancies have been a vexing problem. “The lack of a quorum has put gas- and power-related projects—by some estimates worth a total of about \$50 billion—in limbo for months now,” he writes. “In the modern energy economy, bottlenecks are a false choice. We need an active FERC that will catalyze the growth and evolution of the U.S. energy sector. I, for one, am heartened that FERC appears to be headed toward wholeness.”

The full article is available at <http://www.energycentral.com/c/pip/why-%E2%80%98shutting-down-ferc%E2%80%99-no-option-country>

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