

**Summary Testimony**  
**J. Mark Robinson, Director**  
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**Federal Energy Regulatory Commission**  
**Committee on Environment and Public Works**  
**May 25, 2005**

My name is J. Mark Robinson and I am the director of the Office of Energy Projects (OEP) at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Our office is responsible for the licensing, administration, and safety of approximately 1,600 non-federal hydropower projects; the certification of between 500 and 2,000 miles of interstate natural gas pipelines annually; the certification of natural gas storage facilities; and the authorization, safety and security of liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals.

I will focus on the permitting of energy projects, specifically, natural gas-related facilities. Specifically I will describe the efforts the Commission has made to efficiently process applications, the issues that still detract from our ability to move, in a timely fashion, on energy projects that are in the public interest, and a rational approach to the siting of energy infrastructure that would improve all agencies' ability to reach a decision jointly on needed projects.

The goal of the FERC's natural gas permitting process is to determine if a project is in the public interest. The fundamental concept that governs our efforts is the early identification of project-related issues with all parties that would be affected by the development. This is accomplished through our Pre-Filing process that engages all stakeholders, including Federal and state agencies.

However, our efforts can be derailed by the sheer number of agencies involved in siting facilities. There are inclinations by agencies with a singular authority to duplicate the actions of the primary siting agency. Also, there is a tendency of parochial interests coming before the greater public good.

A rational siting process should be adopted to overcome these challenges. This process would be equally applicable to the siting of any energy infrastructure and consists of three elements: the designation of an agency with exclusive authority to site the projects; a requirement that all agencies with authority over an aspect of the project work with the lead agency to develop one federal record from which all agency decisions would be made; and direct appeal of all agency actions at one time to the federal courts.