

What They Are Saying *The Landowner Fairness Act*

Clarence Adams, affected landowner in Douglas County and President of Landowners United: “The Natural Gas Act has needed reformation for decades. Over the years, through administrative rulings and court cases, the Gas Industry has been able to use the Gas Act as a shield to do pretty much what it wants while leaving landowners little in way of leverage to protect their investment and livelihood. I applaud the Senators continuing efforts to rein in landowner abuse and give us a fair shake.”

John Clarke, affected landowner in Camas Valley: “The Jordan Cove gas project in Coos County has used up a large part of my retired life. The first surveys were in 2006 and we still have the threat in 2021. During those 15 years, my fight has involved numerous meetings and hearings with local and state governments along with meeting with FERC. Especially important is the section requiring the easement be returned to the property owner if the project is not started within a year, which prevents landowners’ property being held hostage and undevelopable for years. Thank you Senators!”

Frank Adams, affected landowner in Douglas County: “I am a 3-tour marine Vietnam Veteran, and have spoken to you numerous times at townhall meetings in the Roseburg area regarding the Pembina natural gas pipeline and their wanting to use eminent domain to take my hard earned and fought for land for 16 years. I was so elated to hear you were coming onboard to help us veterans and other landowners to protect our Constitutional rights. With my waning health and finances, now could not be a better time to introduce this bill. It’s not right for a foreign entity to take over our rights and our land. Thank you ever so much for your hard work pertaining to this bill and retention of our rights.”

Kristine Cates, affected land owner in Camas Valley: “It is extremely encouraging to see the reintroduction of the Landowner Fairness Act. When the Pacific Connector Pipeline was initially proposed for natural gas import, national security could be cited as a justification for use of eminent domain. However, export for foreign corporate profit does not justify use of eminent domain and doing away with the statutory presumption of public interest addresses many of our landowner issues. Also, the potential return of property if a project does not proceed is an important aspect of the bill. I have been particularly concerned regarding this issue as we address climate change. This act gives impacted land owners a voice, which we have needed for many years.”

U.S. Senator Ron Wyden
March 2021

Pamela Brown Ordway, affected landowner in the Douglas County Coastal Zone

Management Area: “Until now, landowners’ rights in the FERC process have, for the most part, been ignored. This legislation acknowledges that these projects do not happen in a vacuum; when projects are approved, there are lives and livelihoods that are directly and permanently impacted. I am encouraged that Senator Wyden’s and Senator Merkley’s legislation address the fact that landowners have been forced to navigate through a process that seemed designed to discourage their participation.”

Ron Schaaf and Deb Evans, affected landowners for 15 years by the proposed Pacific

Connector pipeline: “We applaud Senator Wyden and Senator Merkley for their substantive, focused and groundbreaking bill to modernize the Natural Gas Act. Protection of constitutionally guaranteed property rights and ensuring balance and fairness in the process are key tenets of the bill and something every US citizen should support. Thank you, Senator Wyden and Senator Merkley!”

Bill Gow, affected landowner and rancher in Douglas County: “As a conservative and full-time rancher, my family and I are dependent on the conservation of our land for our livelihood and our way of life. To be swallowed up by corporate America who wants to put their profit ahead of my values, is wrong. It is good to finally see bills that recognize the constitutional rights of rural Americans. We’ve been stomped on by corporate greed with no understanding of how we operate, our values, and the protection of core property rights guaranteed by our Constitution.”

Jim Dahlman, Retired Teacher: “I’m a veteran who gave four years of my life during the Vietnam War to protect the rights and freedoms of all Americans. Yet my rights as a landowner are now being taken away by a foreign company for corporate greed, Senator Wyden’s and Senator Merkley’s proposed Landowner Fairness Act will right this wrong and protect my property.”

David Bookbinder, Chief Counsel at the Niskanen Center: “This bill is a much-needed overhaul of FERC’s system for approving natural gas pipelines, recognizing that landowners are at the mercy of pipeline companies’ unfettered ability to seize their property to build projects that rarely provide any public benefit.”

Jim and Archi Davenport, affected landowners in Coos County for 12 years: “We are very pleased to see Senator Wyden’s and Senator Merkley’s Landowner Fairness Act. This shows that they are listening to the landowners who are deeply affected by these projects such as Jordan Cove. It’s not right for a foreign entity to take over our rights and our land. Thank you so much for your hard work pertaining to this bill and fighting for our rights.”

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Larry and Sylvia Mangan, alternative route landowners in Coos County: “We are pleased that Senators Wyden and Merkley have sided with Oregon landowners in protecting their private property rights with this legislation. Following his town-hall meeting in Coos Bay where citizens raised concerns about potential FERC and Pembina abuses, Senator Wyden sent a staff member to meet with landowners from Jackson, Douglas, and Coos counties to hear their heartfelt stories first hand. We feel that meeting landowners, many on their multi-generational family farms and ranches, helped convince the Senators that this legislation is critical to protecting property rights.”

Jacqueline Evans, a New Jersey homeowner facing condemnation by the proposed PennEast pipeline in Delaware Township, N.J.: "My family has suffered from the unfair treatment of landowners and abuse of eminent domain by pipeline developers under FERC's current review of natural gas pipelines. This legislation contains a host of needed reforms to the Natural Gas Act that will ensure that landowners' concerns are taken seriously and that our properties aren't seized for projects that aren't in the public interest or that don't receive all the approvals necessary to move forward."

Mike Spille, affected landowner on the PennEast Pipeline, West Amwell, N.J.: “This bill will have a very real and lasting impacts on the lives of thousands of individuals and communities in the United States. It will stop pipeline companies from having carte blanche to build wherever they want. Pipeline companies will have to actually negotiate reasonable routes that minimize disruption, and have to prove these pipelines are actually needed, and not just short term money grabs.”