

Oppose Senator Sheehy's Attack on Pipeline Opposition and Free Speech

October 8, 2025

The Honorable Ted Cruz and Maria Cantwell
US Senate Committee on Science Commerce and Transportation
254 Russell Senate Building
Washington DC, 20510

Dear Chair Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell:

On behalf of an alliance of public-interest, landowner, Indigenous, and environmental justice organizations, we write to express our deep concern with the pipeline criminalization amendment to the Pipeline Safety Act proposed by Senator Sheehy. Rather than focusing on common-sense regulations that would protect public safety, Senator Sheehy is focused on threatening free speech and preventing collective action.

We urge the Committee to reject any Amendment that criminalizes the activities of those organizing to stop pipeline construction and operations.

Senator Sheehy's amendment is a direct attack on protest activity, threatening those who violate these draconian provisions with fines and up to 20 years in prison. There are already laws against trespassing, as well as damaging and destroying pipeline equipment. Further expanding these provisions to a wide set of activities would serve to squelch peaceful protest and discourse about the public health and safety risks that pipelines pose to communities.

Damaging and destroying pipelines are already criminal activities that we do not support; however, the amendment would extend these attacks to a very broad category of activities that go far beyond current penalties for acts that disrupt pipeline operations and construction. While we do not agree with the destruction of property, we are concerned that community members and landowners may conduct many activities which could be construed as “disrupting” or “preventing the operation or construction” of a pipeline. Under this ambiguous language, those who seek to suppress the voices of people who want to protect their communities and the environment could try to interpret the provision to include peaceful protests, organizing to stop permit approvals, preventing surveyors from trespassing on privately-owned land, or banner hanging.

We stand ready to work with the lawmakers to ensure physical damage does not occur to pipelines, but that cannot include threatening free speech.

Sincerely,

American Civil Liberties Union

Food & Water Watch

ARTivism Virginia

Berks Gas Truth

Between the Waters

Bold Alliance

Breathe Easy Susquehanna County

Bucks Environmental Action

Catskill Mountainkeeper

Center for Biological Diversity

Central Illinois Healthy Community Alliance

Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund

Citizens Against Heartland Greenwashing Projects

Citizens Against Predatory Pipelines

Citizens United for Renewable Energy (CURE)

Climate Hawks Vote

Climate Reality Project Chicago Metro Chapter

Coalition Against CO2 Pipelines

Coalition for a Nuclear Free Great Lakes

Coalition to Ban Unsafe Oil Trains

Coalition to Stop CO2 Pipelines

Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety

CURE

Don't Gas the Meadowlands Coalition

Earth Ethics, Inc.

Eco-Justice Collaborative

Elders Climate Action

Elders Coalition for Climate Action

FreshWater Accountability Project

Hip Hop Caucus

Illinois Peoples Action

Indian Point Safe Energy Coalition

Indigenous Environmental Network

Institute for Policy Studies Climate Policy Program

Kentucky Conservation Committee

Landowner whose property rights are being trampled on

Long Beach Alliance for Clean Energy

Metro East Green Alliance

Micah Six Eight Mission

Mid-Ohio Valley Climate Action

Montana Environmental Information Center

Mukwa

Native Sun

Nuclear Energy Information Service

Nuclear Energy Information Service (NEIS)

Nuclear Information and Resource Service

NWSOFA-Indivisible

NYPAN environmental committee

Occupy Bergen County

Ohio Valley Environmental Advocates

Oregon Conservancy Foundation

Physicians for Social Responsibility
Pennsylvania

Progressive Democrats of America - Central
New Mexico

Putnam County CO2 Action Team

Rockland Coalition to End the New Jim
Crow, Environmental Committee

Sangamon Valley Sierra Club

Santa Cruz Climate Action Network

Save Our Illinois Land

Science and Environmental Health Network

Scientist Rebellion, Turtle Island

SEE (Social Eco Education)

Snake River Alliance

St Luke Presbyterian Church

Sunflower Alliance

Sustainable Springfield

Third Act

Third Act NYC

Town of Universal, Indiana

Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of
Illinois

Virginia Citizens Consumer Council

WaterLegacy

198 methods

350 Bay Area Action

350 Chicago

350 Hawaii