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From: POLITICO Pro Energy Whiteboard
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Subject: Protesters singing 'We Shall Overcome' disrupt FERC meeting

By Darius Dixon

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A group of demonstrators disrupted FERC's first public meeting since January today, breaking into "We Shall Overcome" to protest the agency's work on natural gas pipelines and other energy infrastructure projects.

Several security staff removed the protesters who began singing about 30 minutes into the meeting, and they were followed out of the meeting room by a handful of other activists. The protesters have targeted FERC at its regular monthly meetings, criticizing the regulator's role in approving projects they say contribute to climate change.

"You are harming communities," one protester yelled at the commission. "You are here today to continue the approvals of devastating projects — pipeline projects, spewing methane and harming communities. You're stealing property rights."

About two dozen protesters gathered in front of FERC headquarters before the start of the 10 a.m. meeting, carrying signs and pictures of FERC Chairman Neil Chatterjee and Commissioner Rob Powelson.

Chatterjee later defended the agency's work, and said critics can participate in FERC's process if they have concerns.

"I think that one of the great things about this country is people's freedom of expression," Chatterjee told reporters after today's meeting. "We have a process in place in which people can go through to have their voices heard and voice the critiques that they have about actions that the commission takes. ... The commission doesn't promote the projects. We simply evaluate the applications that are submitted to us."

WHAT'S NEXT: The commission's next meeting is scheduled for Oct. 19.

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