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April 20, 2017

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Texas Senate Committee Approves Kelcy Warren For Parks & Wildlife Commission
Warren still needs two-thirds vote in full Senate

AUSTIN, TX - On a party line vote, the Texas Senate Nominations Committee approved the appointment of Kelcy Warren, CEO of Energy Transfer Partners, to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission. All three Democrats on the committee voted against his appointment, while all four committee Republicans voted in favor.

The vote came just days after an Energy Transfer Partners pipeline [spilled 50,000 barrels of drilling fluid into an Ohio wetland](#), which served as a sobering reminder of the inherent conflict between those representing oil and gas interests and agencies charged with managing and conserving natural resources.

“It’s disappointing that the majority on the committee would support a nominee with such inherent conflicts, but not surprising given the stranglehold the oil and gas industry has on the Texas Legislature,” said Cyrus Reed, Conservation Director of the Sierra Club’s Lone Star Chapter. “We applaud Senators Watson, Menéndez, and Miles for listening to their constituents and acting in the best interest of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The people of Texas deserve someone with actual relevant experience protecting and preserving natural resources, not destroying them.”

Committee members voting against Warren’s nomination were State Senators Kirk Watson (D-Austin), José Menéndez (D-San Antonio), and Boris Miles (D-Houston). Voting for Warren were State Senators Brian Birdwell (R-Waco), Craig Estes (R-Wichita Falls), Van Taylor (R-Plano), and Dawn Buckingham (R-Lakeway).

Warren, who has been sitting on Commission unconfirmed by the Senate since late 2015, gave more than [\\$700,000 to Greg Abbott since 2013](#). Many believe his political contributions to Abbott was the reason he was appointed. Opponents of Warren’s appointment also point to the notorious Dakota Access, Trans-Pecos, and Comanche Trail pipelines in Texas, which have already come at a hefty cost to water, environmental protection, and cultural desecration. Opponents say they do not want it left up to oil and gas industry executives like Warren to make critical decisions that may jeopardize protected areas like Balmorhea and San Solomon Springs.

Because the Parks and Wildlife Commission makes decisions on granting easements, and in limited cases, opening up access to oil and gas leasing to private companies, opponents say Warren's strong industry ties are especially problematic.

For the last several months, thousands of Texans have been emailing and calling their state senators urging them to oppose Warren's nomination. Protests that have reached more than 200 people have taken place at Parks & Wildlife Commission meetings since late 2016.

A full Senate vote with a two-thirds majority is now needed to approve Warren's appointment.

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