

In recent years, energy producers have been at odds with activists who oppose the construction of new pipelines that could transport liquefied natural gas (LNG) to markets in the United States and abroad. Coalitions of citizens' groups have voiced their concerns about the potential threat that new pipelines might pose to the environment and public safety.

As a result, energy producers and the government have sought alternative ways to transport LNG within the confines of current law. In 2015 the United States Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) issued the first permit for transporting LNG by rail. This bureaucratic agency, which is part of the Department of Transportation, expanded the practice in 2017.

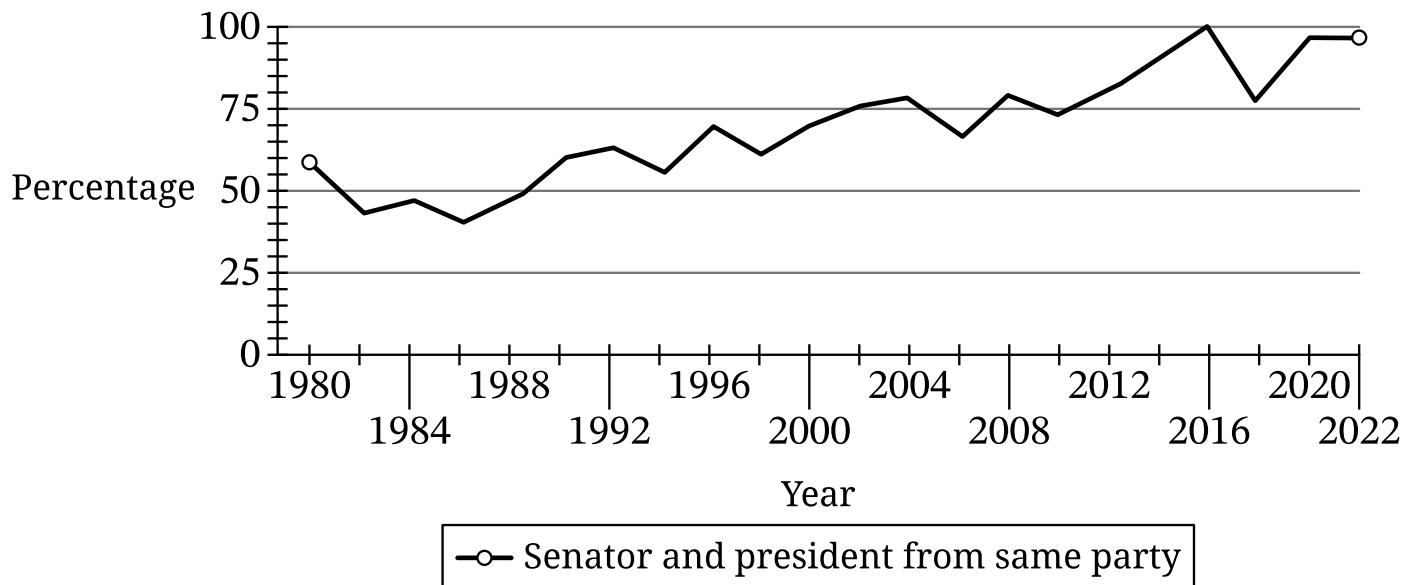
Citizens' groups voiced similar concerns about the transportation of LNG by rail but could not muster enough support in Congress for a new law. The presidential administration at the time responded to pressure from industry groups by supporting the expansion of permits, setting new rules and regulations to make it easier to transport LNG by rail. In 2019, without further direction from Congress, the PHMSA established new safety requirements and expanded the number of permits available.

1. Respond to parts A, B, and C.

- A.** Describe the power the bureaucratic agency used in the scenario.
- B.** Explain how Congress could counteract the use of the power described in part A.
- C.** Explain how the citizens' groups in the scenario illustrate the concept of pluralist democracy.

State Elections for Senator and President, 1980 to 2022

Percentage of Senate elections won by candidates of the same party as their state's most recent presidential election winner



Source: Pew Research Center, 2022

2. Respond to parts A, B, C, and D.

- A. Identify the percentage of Senate elections won by candidates of the same party as their state's most recent presidential election winner in 2018, according to the data in the line graph.
- B. Describe the overall trend in the data shown in the line graph.
- C. Draw a conclusion about the level of partisanship among voters since 1980, using the data shown in the line graph.
- D. Explain how the overall trend shown in the line graph could reflect changes in how people acquire political news.

Question 1: Concept Application

3 points

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- A Describe the power the bureaucratic agency used in the scenario. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- The agency used its discretion, which allows it to make decisions.
- The agency used its rulemaking power when it established new safety requirements.

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- B Explain how Congress could counteract the use of the power described in part A. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Congress could defund the agency which would make it more difficult to issue future permits.
- Congress could pass new legislation that would replace the rule made by the agency, limiting the discretion exercised by the agency.
- Congress could use the power of oversight to pressure the agency into changing the rule it made.
- By conducting an investigation, Congress could find evidence that PHMSA exceeded its authority and could take efforts to limit its discretionary authority in the future.

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- C Explain how the citizens' groups in the scenario illustrate the concept of pluralist democracy. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Multiple groups were trying to influence the policymaking process on the LNG issue, demonstrating the role of activism in the policy making process.
- Groups engaged in activism in an attempt to influence the political decision making process.
- Groups with different interests on the LNG issue competed for influence over the making of policy.
- Activists and citizens' groups voiced concerns which eventually pressured the PHMSA into creating new safety requirements even though Congress did not require them to do so.