

**TESTIMONY OF TERRY O’SULLIVAN
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LABORERS’ INTERNATIONAL UNION OF NORTH AMERICA
ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FEBRUARY 15, 2017**

Chairman Upton, it is an honor to be invited to this hearing. On behalf of the 500,000 strong, proud, and united men and women of the Laborers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA), thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony to your committee. Thank you, as well, for your longstanding support for the members of our Union; for your commitment to protecting the living standards of all workers and their families; and for your leadership in reauthorizing the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act. I also want to thank Ranking Member Rush, and all the committee members for all your work, and for listening to what I have to say.

As the people who build, repair, and maintain our nation’s critical energy infrastructure, LIUNA members support a reasonable, rational, fact-based, all-of-the-above energy policy that creates middle-class jobs, meets America’s growing energy needs, fosters energy independence, protects the environment, and minimizes greenhouse gas emissions. We have watched with dismay as environmental extremists have distorted the facts, disrupted work sites, harassed our members, and abused the regulatory process to obstruct and delay critically needed projects. I therefore appear before you today to voice our support for regulatory reform that:

- Streamlines necessary review processes
- Allows reviews by separate agencies and entities to proceed concurrently
- Provides for more definitive permitting processes that enable projects to move forward without delay once all regulatory concerns have been addressed.

I also wish to add LIUNA's voice to those calling for the speedy filling of vacant spots on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), so that FERC has the quorum necessary to move forward with regulatory reviews and approvals.

Moving forward with this non-partisan agenda will facilitate significant private investment that will create millions of new jobs across all sectors of the economy. It is also critical to addressing and improving the vital energy infrastructure that keeps our lights on, that heats and cools our homes and businesses, and that moves people and goods across the country. This infrastructure is in desperate need of repair and modernization. In its most recent report card on the state of America's infrastructure, the American Society of Civil Engineers gave our energy infrastructure a grade of D+. Yet while we continue to rely on aging electrical grids and pipeline systems, opposition to almost every energy project threatens to derail any attempt to strengthen and improve that infrastructure. It also threatens the creation of good, middle-class jobs.

During the Great Recession, the unemployment rate in the construction sector reached nearly 30%. Were it not for the jobs created by the boom in North American energy development, tens of thousands more workers would have been forced into unemployment. These were good unionized jobs that require a high degree of training and expertise; pay family-sustaining wages with good health insurance benefits; and help provide pensions for the workers when they retire. During the height of the Great Recession, pipeline projects served as lifelines to workers and communities that might otherwise have gone under.

President Trump's executive order clearing the way for the completion of the Dakota Access Pipeline put approximately 4,400 building tradespeople, including 1,000 LIUNA members, back to work. His approvals of the Atlantic Sunrise and Rover pipeline projects will generate several thousand construction jobs, including approximately 2,000 for LIUNA members.

These three projects are among 20 unionized pipeline projects spanning 20 states that are either under construction, about to begin construction, or awaiting approval. At their peak, we expect all of these projects will employ tens of thousands of highly trained, safe, skilled union tradespeople, including approximately 13,000 LIUNA members. The more than five thousand miles of state-of-the-art pipeline these projects are leaving behind are safer, more environmentally sound, and emit fewer greenhouse gases than any other method of transporting energy resources.

For the hard-working members of LIUNA and other building trades unions, these figures are far more than mere numbers on a spreadsheet. They are the means to put food on their families' tables, roofs over their heads, and gas in the tanks of their cars and trucks. These jobs enable them to put their children through college, to save for retirement, and to spend money in business establishments that employ others. Although, like all construction jobs, these jobs last only as long as it takes to complete the project, a steady succession of such so-called "temporary" jobs is what enables construction workers to build rewarding, middle-class careers, and to lift themselves and their families out of poverty. It is ironic that among those who dismiss these jobs because of their "temporary" nature are Hollywood celebrities whose careers are built on similarly temporary jobs in the entertainment industry, and politicians whose own jobs have specific end dates.

Our country needs a common-sense energy policy. Replacing foreign sources of energy with domestically produced energy makes sense. Fostering domestic job creation instead of funding foreign extremists is a rational goal. Incrementally lowering emissions makes more sense than the "all or nothing" approach embraced by the political extremes. And if everyone has a stake in the future of the planet, then everyone deserves to have a voice in the debate. All work has dignity, and no one should be attacked or degraded because s/he seeks to earn a living and provide for his/her family.

LIUNA's support for an all-of-the-above energy strategy reflects the fact that our members work not only on pipelines, but in every sector of the energy industry, including nuclear, wind, and solar. As we meet here in the comfort of this hearing room, our members are hard at work building solar plants in the heat of the California desert, wind farms in the Midwest, and a nuclear facility in Georgia.

LIUNA and the other building trades unions invest hundreds of millions of dollars in training that enables our members to develop the knowledge and skills they need to work safely and productively while constructing energy and other infrastructure to the highest standards. At a time when it is harder and harder to succeed without a college education and the debt that goes with it, LIUNA and Building Trades Local Unions and training funds are the only places where someone can graduate from high-school, enter a training and apprenticeship program, become a qualified journeyman, and build a rewarding middle-class career, all without spending a dime

in tuition. Indeed, apprentices earn while they learn, bringing home steady paychecks that increase as their training progresses. LIUNA is proud that for 114 years, we have provided generations of working-class Americans a pathway to the middle class. We are equally proud that, from the start, we have made that pathway available to all, regardless of race, ethnicity, or national origin.

LIUNA was one of the first unions to endorse a comprehensive cap-and-trade system. Because so many of our members hunt, fish, bike, hike, and camp in the very places they work, they have a vested interest in working in ways that protect nature, reduce harm, and leave the smallest environmental footprint possible. Several years ago, we sought to build common ground with many environment groups, but we became disillusioned, disenchanted, and disheartened by former allies who have found it impossible to embrace rational dialogue and compromise as a model for positive change.

Unleashing the wealth of *all* of America's energy resources will create economic opportunities in communities across the country, while making us less dependent on energy from nations that seek to undermine the American ideals of freedom and liberty. Adequate investment in surface transportation, water infrastructure, and domestic energy will create millions of jobs for workers across all segments of the economy. We can help grow our economy, rescue struggling working Americans, and leave behind real assets that will benefit taxpayers and our entire nation for generations to come. This isn't a Republican issue or a Democratic issue; it's an American issue. Every American benefits from good roads, safe bridges, clean drinking water, and affordable energy.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony. We are eager and excited to work with you in the future. Together we can build America so America works.

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