

Mike Sommers – American Petroleum Institute

Thank you to Sean McGarvey and the Building Trades for welcoming API to this year's Legislative Conference.

You have a great theme this year: "United We Build." The energy industry and the building trades put that motto into action every day.

As you know, [32 percent](#) of today's construction industry workforce is employed on energy projects

And we've only scratched the surface of the opportunity.

United States energy producers are breaking records right and left. We lead the world in natural gas and oil production, and we're on track to become a net energy exporter next year, for the first time in 70 years.

We're producing more energy in more places than ever before. This welcome shift requires infrastructure, and building that infrastructure creates jobs.

Our research shows that building the infrastructure we need to keep pace with record energy production can support up to 1 million-plus jobs per year – jobs building pipelines, and jobs transforming natural gas import facilities into export terminals.

That makes API's partnership with the Building Trades more important than ever.

The energy industry depends on the safest, best-trained, skilled workers you represent.

And I'm proud of joint efforts like the Pipeline Construction Safety Training Program we launched a few months ago – which helps match those skilled workers with jobs that support the U.S. energy resurgence.

Our work together reinforces so many of our mutual priorities, like:

- Ensuring safe operations

- Creating jobs with middle class-sustaining wages

- Building infrastructure to support long-term economic growth

Those aren't just priorities shared by our two industries; they're priorities shared by Americans from coast to coast, and at every point on the political spectrum.

Our latest polling shows 84 percent support for building energy infrastructure – including strong majorities of Democrats, Republicans and Independents.

They know that energy infrastructure creates jobs, and it delivers affordable energy to homes and businesses.

Over the past 10 years:

- Healthcare costs have risen 73%;

- Education costs are up 58% and

- Food costs have increased 26%.

- But U.S. household energy costs have dropped 10.5%.

Access to affordable energy is key to adding manufacturing jobs, and revitalizing communities, in state after state. Just a few examples:

- A new manufacturing [plant](#) going up in Pennsylvania will generate 6000 construction jobs and 600 permanent jobs – and this is in a community that has suffered multiple plant closures in recent years. Thanks to affordable natural gas in the Marcellus Shale – and infrastructure to transport it – things are turning around for this community.

In Texas, JSW Steel just announced a \$500 million investment, and they cited “access to natural gas at extremely economical prices” as a driver.

Then there’s a snack food manufacturer in Wisconsin that built a natural gas pipeline. Not only have they reduced their energy costs – savings the company can now invest in its workers – but they’ve also decreased their greenhouse gas emissions by an estimated 35%.

That last point is key to anyone who questions energy infrastructure on climate grounds. We’re privileged to be joined today by a number of political leaders who all champion building roads and bridges because they know infrastructure development delivers jobs for American workers.

I’d add energy infrastructure to that list. For anyone who has doubts about energy infrastructure, I’ll give you two numbers: 99, and 1. Pipelines deliver their products at a safety rate of 99.99 percent. And the United States is No. 1 in the world in reducing carbon emissions – that’s thanks to clean natural gas.

The facts show that energy production and infrastructure development are compatible with environmental progress.

And the partnership the building trades and the energy industry has built, and training programs we’ve developed, demonstrate that we can build infrastructure that is safe and creates good paying jobs.

Our work together shows that our commitment to environmental stewardship starts even before we break ground; it starts in the training process.

I’ll give you one more number: zero. That’s the number of taxpayer dollars we’re asking for to create these 1 million jobs per year. These are privately funded projects that generate enormous public benefits for decades.

With permitting reforms that bring greater efficiency and transparency to the approval process, we can get it done.

Thank you again to the Building Trades for your partnership. I look forward to continuing to work together, and build together.