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LiUNA!

January 15, 2015

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 500,000 members of the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA), I am writing to urge you to support H.R.161, the "Natural Gas Pipeline Permitting Reform Act." This legislation would create and enforce the necessary deadlines for both the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), as well as many other federal agencies that are involved with the approval process of natural gas pipeline projects.

LIUNA represents thousands of workers who build our nation's pipeline infrastructure. We have seen a tremendous amount of growth in hours for the men and women we represent in the natural gas infrastructure sector. Our members have seen first-hand the unnecessary delays in the permitting process. When the permitting process is stuck in limbo this means our members are delayed in being able to get to work.

H.R. 161 would address this problem by requiring FERC to approve or deny a pipeline permit no later than 12 months (1 year) after receiving a completed application, and it would require federal agencies to consider all completed applications within 90 days following FERC's review. This would be after FERC has completed its environmental review under NEPA, thereby allowing the environmental review process to properly take place. Also, by this point in the process, a pipeline project developer has been consulting with FERC and permitting agencies for at least 12 months. The bill will also grant an additional 30 days for unanticipated circumstances. Currently FERC is not given the authority to enforce the deadlines which has led to permitting agencies to sit on some of the applications.

Between now and 2035, IHS Global Insight (an energy consulting firm) has estimated that $3 trillion in capital investments would be required to develop unconventional gas resources. This investment would create upwards of 2.1 million jobs and generate roughly $1.4 trillion in federal, state, and local tax revenue through 2035. The construction industry is one of the top beneficiaries of unconventional gas investment. IHS estimates that employment in the construction industry along with other industries that support unconventional oil and gas operations will grow by 45% between 2012 and 2025. The construction industry is estimated to support, on average, 216,000 workers annually. Labor income from pipeline construction alone will reach $6.5 billion in 2025. These pipeline projects create good paying jobs for hard working Americans within the construction sector.

Feel the Power

With this rapid rise in both demand and production, it is estimated that 47,000 miles of new pipelines are needed. It is the members of LIUNA and the other three unions that are signatory to the National Pipeline Agreement that do this work. Due to the current untimely permitting process, much of this production is placed on hold, costing both time and money, and forcing missed in-service dates. This also means no work for our members when unnecessary delays happen. The financial impact that natural gas pipeline projects have on our members and the U.S. economy is too great to be held down by the current approval process.

I urge you to support H.R. 161, the "Natural Gas Pipeline Permitting Reform Act."

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

TERRY O'SULLIVAN
General President

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