

TESTIMONY OF MONICA MARTINEZ
PRESIDENT, HISPANICS IN ENERGY
BEFORE THE U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
HEARING ON
“AMERICAN ENERGY JOBS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR SKILLED TRADES WORKERS”

April 29, 2014

Good morning Chairman Hastings, Ranking Member DeFazio, and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the issues under consideration and study. I commend each of you for taking the time to focus on the important opportunity of energy jobs for our workforce of today and the future.

I am Monica Martinez, President of Hispanics in Energy. Hispanics in Energy is a newly formed organization focused on engaging our Hispanic and other diverse communities in our nation’s energy policy dialogue and workforce. 2013 marked our inaugural year during which we held several policy summits across the nation in order to engage our communities on greater energy literacy. Two policy summits were held - one in Sacramento, California, and one right here in our nation’s capital. I know several members of this committee provided remarks at our DC policy summit, so thank you once again for your participation. This year we have focused our efforts on jobs in energy and bringing a “community conversation” on workforce preparedness to cities across the country.

I would like to briefly provide some background on myself and my interest in American Energy Jobs to help explain why I co-founded Hispanics in Energy and why I believe our focus on the opportunities in energy is so critical for our nation. In 2005, I was appointed as a Commissioner to the three-member Michigan Public Service Commission. In fact, at the time I thought my appointment was of significance because of my age – I was the youngest appointed to date in my state. However, I quickly learned after national media outlets clamored for interviews with my female colleague and I – that my appointment signaled the first time females held a majority on any state utility commission. While other states soon followed with the trend, I find it valuable to re-emphasize that this all happened just within the last decade. During my tenure on the Commission, because of my educational and professional background, I also served as a key economic development and jobs advisor to our Governor and our state’s Department of Labor and Economic Growth. I am here before you with a key knowledge of how energy can greatly impact our economy and improve the lives of our citizens.

Please allow me to discuss why I’m here today on behalf of Hispanics in Energy. We are all energy users and we will continue to be energy users. Hispanics in Energy, like many other organizations, believes in an “all of the above approach” to energy. With that we recognize that we use energy for survival and basic necessities, and also use energy for entertainment and those not so necessary items. We are even more cognizant that as energy users, our community can provide the critical workforce infrastructure to our continuing energy needs.

The Hispanic population in the United States is over 53 million, making people of Hispanic origin the nation’s largest ethnic or racial minority – 17 percent of the nation’s total population. According to population projections for 2060, the Hispanic population will constitute 31 percent, or 128.8 million, of our nation’s population. Today, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York and

Texas all have a population of 1 million or more Hispanic residents. At 11.6 million Hispanic family households, we comprise roughly 10 percent of our nation's total households.

For 2011, the median income of Hispanic households was \$38,624, whereas the median income of US households was \$51,100. The poverty rate among Hispanics is roughly 25.3 percent, whereas the national poverty rate is less at 16 percent. I did not mention these figures to bring about a discussion of income inequality; rather, I find them useful in the debate when we discuss jobs and economic opportunity. I recognize the best way to help alleviate poverty and to grow household income is to expand the outreach and availability of good paying jobs. For Hispanics, African Americans, women, and all Americans, the access to the economic opportunity in the energy field can be crucial for helping to boost earnings and bring about greater standards of living.

Although I know a presentation was provided to this Committee's Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee by IHS Global Inc. (IHS) on their recent study "Minority and Female Employment in the Oil & Gas and Petrochemical Industries", I'd be remiss if I did not reiterate some of its findings. In 2010, the US oil and gas industry and the petrochemical industry together employed a total of 1.2 million people, rough 8.2 percent were African American, 15.7 percent were Hispanic, and women accounted for 19 percent. IHS projects a total of nearly 1.3 million direct job opportunities over the 2010-2030 period, considering all types of job growth. Of these opportunities, they project that 32 percent, or 408,000 jobs will be held by African Americans and Hispanics in 2030. IHS estimates that 63 percent of all job opportunities will be blue collar jobs. This means a tremendous opportunity.

As I briefly mentioned earlier, Hispanics in Energy has been engaging in "community conversations" on this very topic. Together, with the American Association of Blacks in Energy, and in partnership with the US Department of Energy, we have initiated a national eight city community tour that brings the discussion of opportunities directly to our communities. Our intent is to increase awareness of the jobs that exist in the energy field. The local dialogues also encompass a discussion with community leaders to assess the current structures that exist within the community and to bring forth a brainstorming session on what more we can do to address any challenges.

Through Hispanics in Energy's previous and current work, we have found that four principles can be utilized to help America take the best advantage of existing and future job opportunities in energy. The four principles we have found include the following: 1) general dissemination of energy opportunities to educators, parents, community leaders and the general public; 2) student engagement at all levels – including elementary thru high school, and technical and college level students; 3) expanding the network of engagement by energy providers and companies to create a pipeline of prospective workers; and 4) assessing outcomes by utilizing data, analysis, and benchmarks. I will briefly touch on each one of these principles.

General dissemination of energy opportunities to the entire community and the general public is critical. Utilities and other energy providers are facing a significant transitioning of workers due to retiring baby boomers. This, along with the growth in the industry, has caused a greater demand for workers. However, not everyone grows up thinking they are going to have a career in energy. In fact, very few do. And, even fewer think about traditional energy jobs as an opportunity. This is due in part to the lower turnover in these jobs, and therefore fewer jobs historically available. Because of the increasing job opportunities, we need to reach out to our community leaders and educators to share the story of the opportunity so that today and tomorrow's workforce can be prepared for a job in energy.

The second principle is really focused on reaching out to prospective employees sooner rather than later. Believe it or not, I do mean reaching out to our elementary and middle-school aged children, as well as, high school and college/technical level students. We must continue to emphasize the need for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics as a pathway to career opportunity. We must also emphasize that a student's pathway might differ from college – and that includes a technical or skilled trade pathway. Sadly, with our focus on college and college preparation, this is often neglected. We often disconnect ourselves from unfortunate trends in high school and middle school drop-out rates. However, imagine if we helped to ensure a pathway for all students – perhaps some students would stay in school? Looking for any job, including blue collar jobs in energy, can still require one to have a high school diploma. Let's ensure we are doing all we can to allow the door for opportunity to be open.

The third principle really involves the activity of energy companies and providers. These entities must continue to expand their networks and engagement to increase the pool of qualified applicants. Several energy companies have partnered with veterans workforce entities at the state level to ensure that job opportunities are made available for our very skilled and able veterans. This provides great opportunity for this segment of the population. Other efforts can be to continue partnership with organizations like Hispanics in Energy and the American Association of Blacks in Energy, along with other community partners, to help ensure that a diverse and qualified workforce is provided the opportunity of energy jobs. In business we find we must constantly expand our reach, the same holds true for expanding the applicant pool for these energy jobs. Utilizing non-traditional networks can be the key to filling these positions.

The final principle is really assessing the outcomes by utilizing data, analysis, and benchmarks. Perhaps I am fond of this one because as a former regulator and state economic and jobs policy advisor, I would always meet with businesses and companies that would tell their story of economic opportunity. And, my question was always the same – “show me.” I referenced the IHS report, and I believe that is a good showing of data and analysis. Going forward, I would continue to take that a step further and look to see how the energy industry in fact moves in the direction of expanding jobs and filling those positions with the diverse communities discussed. For example, a shortcoming represented in the findings was the already low share of women in the semi-skilled and unskilled blue-collar occupation groups. With the job opportunities available, more can be done to increase interest and training to boost female participation in these areas. At the very least, we can create a goal to increase this population's involvement and monitor the trends in successfully achieving this outcome.

In closing, we know that job opportunities will be made available as the workforce transitions over the next decade with the retiring baby boomers. In fact, estimates from some energy companies anticipate as much as 1/3 of their employees transitioning. In addition, as the energy landscape modernizes and expands, this also increases the jobs available. While some of these jobs require a college degree or advanced education, some do not. Those that do not will still require a skills and training, and often a high school education. We must continue to spread the message of the opportunity available in the energy field. Doing so, will enable many Americans to live the American dream and find the economic opportunity that comes with it.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to provide remarks on this important issue. As a nation of energy users, we must ensure that we promote and carry the message of the job opportunities in energy for all.



Energizing American Communities

A Community Conversation about Energy, Opportunities, and Workforce Readiness

About The Community Conversation

America's energy industry is embarking on a great potential to help America become energy self-reliant while also providing its people a remarkable economic incentive manifested in both jobs and business. Hispanics In Energy (HIE) and the American Association of Blacks in Energy (AABE) are committed to promoting discussion with key stakeholder representatives to address the employment of Hispanics, African Americans and other diverse communities for jobs created by the country's energy projects. Therefore, HIE and AABE announce the launch of a series of one-day workforce development summits focused on job readiness with key regional leaders in eight cities throughout America.

Strategic Collaborative Between Hispanics In Energy and the American Association of Blacks In Energy

This event is being co-led and administered under the auspices of both HIE and AABE in the following eight cities:

- Energize Chicago, IL – February 28
- Energize Bakersfield, CA – March 19
- Energize Philadelphia, PA – April 28
- Energize Las Cruces, NM – May 29
- Energize Canton, OH – June 10
- Energize Detroit, MI – June 26
- Energize Denver, CO – TBD
- Energize Charlotte, NC – TBD

Who Should Attend

Oil, natural gas, utility, renewable energy executives, federal, state and local elected and appointed officials, school board members and school district superintendents, college presidents, faculty and curriculum development staff, labor apprenticeship leaders, human resource managers and directors, workforce investment board members and executives, business owners and executives, leaders of parent teacher associations, leaders of chambers of commerce, leaders of community-based organizations; professional societies, faith-based organizations, and others are encouraged to participate.



BIOMASS COAL GAS HYDRO OIL NUCLEAR PETROLEUM SOLAR WIND



Strategic Alliances

- American Petroleum Institute
- Members of Congress
- United States Department of Energy
- State Governments
- Local officials
- State Petroleum Councils
- Vocational Education Leaders
- Universities and Colleges
- Community Colleges System
- AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
- TELACU Education Foundation
- Parent Teacher Associations
- National Society of Black Engineers
- Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers
- American Indians In Energy
- Workforce Investment Boards
- Community-Based Organizations

