



# Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Doc Hastings

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## **Work Hard AND Smart**

### *Hearing Examines Opportunities in Skilled Trades Jobs in Energy Sector*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today, the House Committee on Natural Resources held an oversight hearing on “*American Energy Jobs: Opportunities for Skilled Trades Workers.*” The hearing examined the well-paying jobs opportunities for technical and skilled workers that have been created by the recent American energy boom.

Unemployment in the United States remains at 6.7 percent, whereas states like North Dakota with a flourishing energy sector has an unemployment rate at 2.7 percent. Skilled trades jobs are an integral part of the American energy renaissance, and skilled trades workers continue to be in high demand even though overall job recovery since the recession has been slow. These well-paying jobs often do not require a 4-year college degree and can be ascertained through various jobs training and apprenticeship opportunities.

*“These skilled trades jobs are a living example of how this American energy boom is helping to make life work for millions of American families from coast to coast – and by doing so, these individuals are pulling our nation out of a recession while also increasing our national security,”* [said House Natural Resources Chairman Doc Hastings \(WA-04\).](#)

Witnesses at the hearing highlighted the opportunity for those in the skilled trades in the energy sector and solutions to the widening skilled trades workforce gap through education, awareness, and increased energy production.

*“When I was 17 my high school guidance counselor tried to talk me into a four year degree, I had nothing against college, in fact I aspired to it, but the colleges Mr. Dunbar recommended were expensive and I had no idea what I wanted to study. So I told him a two-year school made more sense for me, but Mr. Dunbar told me that anything less than a four-year would be beneath my potential. Those are his exact words, ‘beneath my potential.’*

*(Mr. Dunbar had a poster on his walls) Work smart, not hard. Look at the poster and tell me which one you want to be. The message was crystal clear. That was the first time an adult warned me about the perils of hard work.*

*Hundreds of thousands of good jobs remain unfilled even as millions of Americans are looking for work, but still we lend money we don't have to kids who can't pay it back so they can buy expensive four year degrees and pursue jobs that don't exist anymore. That is the legacy of the society that embraces a cliché. That is why I am here today, since 2008 the mikeroweWorks foundation has tried to challenge the stigmas and stereotypes that keep millions of people from pursuing a whole list of great careers.*

*For starters, I revised this stupid poster into something a little bit saner and that is the alternative as you can now see it says **work hard AND smart**. It is a simple little distinction but I think it matters” – **Mike Rowe, CEO, mikeroweWorks, former host of Discovery’s “Dirty Jobs”***

*“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” – [Monica Martinez](#), **President, Hispanics in Energy***

*“We believe a key part of the solution is enacting a national energy plan that will address our energy needs, ensure our energy independence, and grow our economy. Thankfully, Congress has expressed a great deal of interest in enacting sound policy that will promote America’s energy production and provide greater opportunities to continue to encourage construction. We applaud those efforts and hope that Congress will enact comprehensive energy strategy that promotes development of all available energy resources including upgrading and modernizing transmission lines, increasing domestic oil, expanding natural gas exploration, investing in nuclear power, and further investments in clean and renewable energy sources.” – [Robert Flurer](#), **Vice-President, Skeels Electric Company***

*“Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, my members want to work. But instead they find themselves hat in hand as coal-fired power plants are shutdown, technologies like CCS are not supported on the same playing field as alternative energy, and the natural gas boom that is occurring across our country has to continually look over its shoulder for the threat of federal regulation. North America's Building Trades Unions believe that government must become an advocate for businesses, an advocate for American workers and an advocate for jobs, and stop being an adversary or a roadblock time and time again” – [Sean McGarvey](#), **President, North America’s Building Trades Union***

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