

THE HILL



June 2, 2017

Americans win when energy competes

By: Doug Haugh

Energy is a hot topic these days, but lost in the news cycle is the truth behind domestic energy production.

America has the greatest endowment of resources on the planet. But these domestic resources are not just about the coal in the mountains of West Virginia, the oil in West Texas, the wind in Wyoming, or the sun in Arizona. The most precious and powerful of our domestic resources are the people working, researching, building and leading companies in the most competitive energy industry in the world.

There were over 1.9 million workers directly employed in electric power generation and fuels technologies last year, according to the Department of Energy. They are deployed almost evenly between traditional oil and gas — with 1.1 million employees — and low-carbon power generation such as renewables, nuclear and natural gas, which claimed nearly 800,000 employees.

Job growth is important to those in every sector, but few industries are as important as energy. Cheap, reliable energy is a fundamental foundation beneath every corner of our economy, regardless of whether it's a hospital, school campus, local corner store or data center. Energy is fundamental to your success.

Yet most Americans don't think about the energy industry on a regular basis because it rarely causes them problems. Americans enjoy some of the cheapest heat, power and transportation costs of any developed economy, and our businesses never have to plan their work around fuel shortages or power outages. Affordable and reliable energy is the silent support behind every business, every household and every community.

Let's keep it that way. All energy industry employees should be empowered to drive our economy and increase prosperity, not just the coal miners or the oil drillers, not just the solar installers or those erecting wind turbines, but everyone with the talent and drive to provide the energy our economy needs to grow. To unleash these resources the gov-

ernment needs to do less, not more. Edison's light didn't beat Rockefeller's gas lamp because government decided it was better and cheaper. The market picked the winner.

Instead of trying to pick winners, government policy should focus on ensuring open competition, provide continued protection of clean air and water and support the education of as many scientists, engineers and technologists as possible.

Leave the rest of our energy future to the consumers that buy energy and those of us competing to supply it. When solar power has to compete with power generated with natural gas and coal it gets cheaper because it must.

When it does, America wins. If solar and wind only gain market share because of government mandates, then America loses. Electric cars don't need Washington intervention to succeed — they need a cheaper battery.

The president often says that he will lift the restrictions on American energy, and "allow this wealth to pour into our communities." He's right. Our communities will become wealthier if we develop energy policies promoting job creation in every energy sector. Free competition for every energy dollar we spend will not only make American energy cleaner and greener, but will make energy cheaper.

The Trump administration, Energy Secretary Rick Perry and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt fundamentally get this. They realize less government is more. They understand an "America first" energy plan means more jobs producing cleaner and cheaper energy from all of our resources.

To those in our industry decrying their attempts to unwind government activism and energy subsidies, I say stop wasting your energy.

You're better than that. Go to work. Go compete. Go win.

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