



Feel the Power



August 27, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Our organizations represent two constituencies who are essential to achieving our country's energy and climate goals—the workers who construct and the companies that develop and operate the critical energy infrastructure that reliably delivers affordable, domestically produced natural gas every single day. We are writing to encourage you to swiftly nominate a new commissioner to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to fill the impending vacancy created by the end of Commissioner Neil Chatterjee's term. Nominating a commissioner who has a deep understanding of how natural gas infrastructure is developed and who will promote a clear, consistent, and timely regulatory process that enables needed natural gas infrastructure investment—and the jobs supported by that investment—is key to achieving your administration's priorities.

The last 18 months have demonstrated that reliable access to affordable, domestically produced natural gas is essential. Natural gas reduces energy costs for millions of American families and businesses working to build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic,<sup>1</sup> promotes the United States' energy independence and national security,<sup>2</sup> reduces our country's greenhouse gas emissions,<sup>3</sup> and supports the growth of renewable energy.<sup>4</sup> The United States cannot realize these significant benefits, however, without a robust natural gas infrastructure.

The construction and maintenance of natural gas infrastructure also furthers your Administration's policy of prioritizing the creation of well-paying union jobs. A 2018 study by ICF found that between 2018 through 2035, energy infrastructure development will support an average of 725,000 jobs in the U.S. and Canada, adding more than \$800 billion in labor income and \$1 trillion in economic value.<sup>5</sup> These jobs provide family-supporting wages and benefits. The natural gas construction industry has a median hourly wage of \$27.56—approximately 44% higher than the national average—and unionization rates that far surpass the national private sector rate.<sup>6</sup> Middle class jobs in the pipeline sector support thousands of families.

Because FERC is charged with reviewing and permitting interstate natural gas infrastructure projects, investment in critical natural gas infrastructure—and the jobs supported by that investment—depend on a clear and consistent

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<sup>1</sup> Catherine Hausman & Ryan Kellog, *Welfare and Distributional Implications of Shale Gas*, BROOKINGS PAPERS ON ECON. ACTIVITY 71 (2015), [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/2015a\\_hausman.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/2015a_hausman.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Energy Information Administration, *U.S. total energy exports exceed imports in 2019 for the first time in 67 years* (Apr. 20, 2020), <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=43395#>.

<sup>3</sup> Natural gas infrastructure has helped enable a 33% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions from the U.S. power sector between 2005–2019. Fuel switching to natural gas accounted for more than half of these reductions. *U.S. Energy-Related Carbon Dioxide Emission, 2019*, EPA (Sept. 2020), <https://www.eia.gov/environment/emissions/carbon/>.

<sup>4</sup> Natural gas provides flexible, fast-ramping generation and reliable energy storage that complements intermittent renewable generation. Research from the National Bureau of Economic Research, for example, found a correlation between the growth of natural gas for power generation and the increased deployment of renewable power. *Bridging the Gap: Do Fast Reacting Fossil Technologies Facilitate Renewable Energy Diffusion?*, NAT'L BUREAU OF ECON. RESEARCH (July 2016), <https://www.nber.org/papers/w22454>.

<sup>5</sup> ICF, *NORTH AMERICA MIDSTREAM INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGH 2035* (2018), <https://www.ingaa.org/File.aspx?id=34703>.

<sup>6</sup> BW RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP, ENERGY FUTURES INITIATIVE, & NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE ENERGY OFFICIALS, *WAGES, BENEFITS, AND CHANGE: A SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT TO THE ANNUAL U.S. ENERGY AND EMPLOYMENT REPORT (2021)*, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a98cf80ec4eb7c5cd928c61/t/606d1178a0ee8f1a53e66206/1617760641036/Wage+Report.pdf>.

regulatory process at FERC. This process in turn depends on a full complement of five FERC commissioners who are committed to evaluating each project on its merits, in accordance with federal law and established FERC precedent, and ensuring that needed natural gas infrastructure is built in a timely fashion. Furthermore, FERC's policy decisions have the potential to leverage natural gas infrastructure and natural gas workers to accelerate climate progress, and the next FERC commissioner should seek to enable this progress to support both natural gas consumers and workers during the ongoing energy transition. We urge you to quickly nominate such a commissioner to fill the impending vacancy at FERC in order to promote the predictable, efficient, and equitable regulatory process needed to realize the substantial benefits of natural gas infrastructure development for all Americans.

We support your Administration's goal of creating a clean, affordable, modern, and reliable energy system and appreciate that you have recognized the role natural gas will play in our energy future. Filling the Commission's vacant seat with a qualified nominee will help our members continue to meet the energy needs of everyday Americans and their families.

Sincerely,

**Amy Andryszak**  
President & CEO  
Interstate Natural Gas Association of America

**Terry O'Sullivan**  
General President  
Laborers' International Union of North America