



August 10, 2018

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and
Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6175

The Honorable Tom Carper
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and
Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6175

Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper:

I am writing on behalf of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers District 2, which includes the states of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine, to offer our support for the Water Quality Certification Improvement Act of 2018. While upholding important environmental protections, this legislation will improve and clarify the permitting process for key energy projects that create jobs for America's skilled trades people.

Over the past several years, our organization has experienced first-hand the troubling actions of environmental special interests and state governments to bog down good energy projects with unnecessary and costly permitting requirements. The sole aim of these actions is to stop energy development regardless of a project's merits and benefits, and they have successfully stalled a variety of energy development projects, including electrical transmission, power plant construction, gas pipelines and others.

New England's lack of investment in energy infrastructure, particularly natural gas infrastructure, continues to be a critical issue for our region. The impacts of this lack of investment and resulting instability to our region's energy market is particularly harmful to skilled tradespeople and thousands of working families in New England.

This past winter, these problems continued to undermine our region's competitiveness, hampered investment and undermined job creation and retention. Recent negative developments in the state's energy sector have included:

- Limitations on natural gas supplies undermined energy security in the region this past winter making New England the costliest natural gas market in the world;
- Natural gas shortages resulted in New England relying on shipments of imported Russian liquid natural gas;
- Release of an ISO New England analysis that found inadequate fuel supplies could lead to future energy shortfalls with most scenarios requiring the frequent use of emergency actions, including rolling blackouts; and
- Continued retirement of existing power facilities and growing pressure on coal- and oil-fired generation to retire in coming years - resulting in the loss of skilled trades jobs impacting thousands of working families in our state.

Ultimately, these problems stem from the state's lack of progress in developing natural gas infrastructure and ensuring adequate natural gas supplies for electricity generation throughout the year. In fact, proposals to make these critical investments have been stalled, and there has been little effort by New England elected officials to move this issue forward.

In addition to providing stability to our energy market and economic benefits, investment in energy infrastructure will create thousands of jobs in our state. Skilled tradespeople needed for various energy project construction include: outside electrical linemen, construction laborers, operating engineers, boilermakers, carpenters, inside electricians, instrumentation technicians, insulators, ironworkers, millwrights, painters, welders, plumbers, and pipefitters. When American workers are employed to build critical infrastructure for our country everyone benefits.

IBEW District 2 urges your continued work and support for the Water Quality Certification Improvement Act of 2018. Your leadership on this issue will bring significant benefits to all citizens, create a foundation for decades of economic growth, and create thousands of skilled trades jobs.

Sincerely,

Michael Monahan

*International Vice President
IBEW Second District*

