February 23, 2016

The Honorable Fred Upton  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Hudson  
Subcommittee on Energy and Power  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bobby Rush  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Energy and Power  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Upton, Ranking Member Pallone, Representative Hudson and Ranking Member Rush:

As an industry undergoing an historic expansion made possible by increased domestic natural gas supplies, the American Chemistry Council (ACC) applauds your effort in sponsoring legislation to create a 21st century energy and manufacturing workforce. This legislation will be considered during a House Energy and Commerce Committee markup on February 24, 2016.

While America’s energy and manufacturing sectors are expanding, we have also been challenged to fill new positions and replace retirees. In the chemical sector, these challenges have only grown steeper as new shale-related projects move forward. To date, 266 projects representing $164 billion in U.S. investment are completed, under construction, or in the planning phase. Our new factories and capacity expansions will create hundreds of thousands of well-paying jobs, strengthen communities, and promote economic growth across the nation.

According to a report from the National Association of Manufacturers, two-thirds of U.S. manufacturers are experiencing moderate to severe worker shortages, with up to 600,000 jobs going unfilled. Critical manufacturing industries like the business of chemistry need policies that will support the growing need for skilled workers. President Obama has called vocational training programs a “robust path to middle income jobs.” We must lay the groundwork now to meet these needs.
The "21st Century Workforce" bipartisan language is a significant step forward. It establishes a comprehensive program to improve education and training for energy and manufacturing-related jobs. The American Chemistry Council appreciates having had the opportunity to work with the Committee during this legislation's development to highlight the important role that increased and improved workforce development can benefit the chemical manufacturing industry.

Thank you for your continued leadership on this important national issue.

Sincerely,

Cal Dooley