April 27, 2015

The Honorable Ed Whitfield  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy and Power  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Washington, DC 20515  

The Honorable Bobby Rush  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Energy and Power  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Washington, DC 20515  

Dear Chairman Whitfield 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 the bipartisan discussion draft entitled "21st Century Workforce" to create a 21st century energy and manufacturing workforce, and for holding the important legislative hearing on April 23rd. The language, which will become part of the Committee's broader energy package, will be an important title and contribution to the overall broader Committee energy legislative package.

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, 229 projects representing $140 billion in U.S. investment are planned or underway. Our new factories and expansions will create hundreds of thousands of well-paying jobs, strengthen communities and promote economic recovery 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 U.S. 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, to become Title II of the House Architecture of Abundance energy legislation, is a significant step forward. It establishes a comprehensive program to improve education and training for energy and manufacturing-related jobs.

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

Sincerely,

Cal Dooley