

**Opening Statement of Congressman Gene Green
House Subcommittee on Energy and Power
“21st Century Energy Workforce Development Jobs Initiative Act”
September 17, 2014**

Good morning.

I want to thank the Chairman and the Ranking Member for holding this hearing today.

I want to thank our witnesses for coming up and testifying today.

Today, we are here to discuss an issue that is very important to the district I represent.

I am pleased that Representative Rush has crafted this legislation and I am proud to be an original co-sponsor.

For years, many of the industries I represent have complained of workforce shortages.

In East Houston/Harris County, if we were able to recruit every union electrician in the country, we would still have a shortage.

The economy in our part of the country is rapidly expanding thanks to the development of the Eagleford shale and the Permian Basin.

We must ensure that this economic prosperity is shared across all of our community.

In Texas, workforce diversity is not only a reality, it's a necessity.

But as I've stated before, Texas is once again leading the charge and producing results.

This time in workforce development.

Thanks to efforts by ExxonMobil and the Texas Gulf Coast Community College Consortium, we are addressing the workforce needs of our industries.

The Community College PetroChemical Initiative is a public-private partnership that is unique in the industry.

The Consortium includes nine community colleges, including San Jacinto College in my district.

The program expects to attract as many as 50,000 students and educators across the state over the next five years.

The program will provide certification and degree programs in a variety of technical fields, including:

- Computer and electrical technology,
- Machining, welding, and pipefitting, and;
- Other skills and competencies needed by the chemical manufacturing and refining industries.

The composition of the student body at San Jacinto College overwhelming favors workforce diversity.

Over 70 percent of the students are part-time, which means they are most likely working professionals that are trying to obtain education for a better job.

Over 46 percent of the students that attend the San Jacinto are of Hispanic or Latino origins.

Over 56 percent of the students are women.

Through programs like CCPI, the industry job opportunities can become realities.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on this bill to ensure that success like we have in East Harris County is duplicated nationwide.