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Introduction

Chairman Bingaman, Ranking Member Domenici, and other distinguished members of the Committee: My name is Andra Cornelius, CEcD, and I am Vice President of Business Outreach for Workforce Florida, Inc. I am honored to have this opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of Workforce Florida, the state's workforce investment board. As such Workforce Florida is charged with fulfilling responsibilities outlined in the federal Workforce Investment Act. Working with the Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation and 24 regional workforce boards throughout the state, Workforce Florida's mission is to develop our state's business climate through strategies that help Floridians enter, remain and advance in the workforce, becoming more highly skilled and successful, benefiting our enterprises and the entire state. Our success at strengthening Florida's economy also boosts our national economic outlook.

Florida Workforce System Background

We are very proud of the accomplishments of Florida's public workforce system, which has been recognized as a national model for its innovative solutions to meeting workforce needs. The system was restructured in 2000 to create Workforce Florida, which is a nonprofit, public-private partnership. What makes our system unique is that a majority of Workforce Florida's Board of Directors represents Florida businesses and this workforce investment board is empowered to set policy by directing the appropriated resources. This ensures Florida's workforce system remains demand-driven and flexible to meet needs in an ever-changing economy. The Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation is our state-level partner and it is charged with administrative oversight of

the regional workforce boards, governing compliance and providing technical assistance. At the local level, where most of the service delivery occurs, the also business-led regional workforce boards direct programs and resources for businesses and job seekers that are tailored to meet each community's unique needs.

In my testimony today, I seek to address the intent of this hearing by providing a state workforce investment board's perspective on whether our nation's energy industry will have the available workforce, both craft and professional, to meet growing needs and whether gaps exist that Congress should act to address. In doing so, I would like to speak to what Florida's workforce system has done over the past 18 months to better understand the energy industry's workforce needs in our state, our accomplishments to date, and the challenges and opportunities we believe are ahead in implementing lasting workforce solutions for this vital sector. Finally, I would like to offer a few suggestions for this committee to consider as you continue to develop strategies in this critical area. Simply stated, I would like to share with you the three P's we have learned are essential in order to meet existing and future workforce challenges facing Florida's — and our nation's — energy sector. They are: **partnership**, **pipeline** and, your influential role, **policy**.

Creating New Partnerships

Developing lasting workforce solutions requires partnerships among industry, education, economic development and workforce. Across the nation, our workforce systems are challenged to provide services within the reality of a global economy. Prosperity in the New Economy requires a highly skilled and productive workforce. Improving the skills of our nation's workers to meet technological advances and support economic expansion has been identified as one of

the most pressing needs facing our communities today. That need holds true too for the energy industry. Florida's energy industry is made up of a diverse mix of electric companies: investor-owned utilities, municipals and rural cooperatives. These companies employ about 26,350 people statewide, often in well-paying jobs that exceed the state and national annual average wages, but I'll discuss this more a bit later. Our state is fortunate that our economic outlook has remained strong with low unemployment and, though slowing, continued job growth. With a labor force of more than 9.2 million, Florida's 4 percent unemployment rate in September 2007 was below the national rate of 4.7 percent. Our state's unemployment rate has been below the national average since mid-2002 and based on nationwide data the September rate was the lowest of the 10 most populous states. Simultaneously, Florida ranked third in job growth among the most populous states, behind Texas and California, with an employment growth rate of 1.3 percent in September, representing 105,700 new jobs over the same period a year ago. The statewide job growth rate was slightly higher than the national job growth rate of 1.2 percent for September. Still, as our Governor Charlie Crist has proclaimed: We in Florida are not just focused on creating jobs, but *good* jobs that lead to a better quality of life for Floridians and keep our economy strong.

Our state workforce investment board has chosen to direct Florida's mostly federal funding for workforce development to programs and services that lead to high-skill, high-wage employment and advancement opportunities in high-value industries. These are targeted industries that drive our regional and state economies, thus aligning with our state's economic development plan. It's only recently that the energy industry has become one of those workforce development targets, contributing to Workforce Florida's leadership role last year in the formation of the Florida

Energy Workforce Consortium (FEWC), which is one of the key collaborative efforts I wish to discuss today. I must say too that in creating this consortium we had some extraordinary motivation.

Understanding Energy Workforce Needs

You likely remember the four uninvited visitors to our state in 2004: Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne. Hurricane Dennis followed them in 2005. In the wake of the destruction of each of those storms, our utilities were essential in the rapid recovery of our businesses and citizenry. Line technicians were literally our heroes. They restored our power enabling us to get our businesses and our lives back in order. Prior to these storms, the energy industry was never one of Florida's economic development targets — in other words, it was not an industry we actively recruited, expanded or retained. However, after the series of storms, we realized just how vital this industry is to our state's economic stability. We knew we needed to begin our outreach by hearing from our industry partners, so we asked colleagues at Gulf Power Company and Progress Energy to help us get started and to ensure we had all of the major players at the table.

Formed in April 2006, the consortium seeks to identify and develop solutions to meet the needs of the utility industry in Florida. The consortium is comprised of representatives from energy companies and associations, the workforce system, secondary and post-secondary educational institutions, labor organizations, and the national Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD). I'll discuss more about the national center's role and support later too. Interestingly, all of Florida's investor-owned utilities are at the table and have been from the beginning. This is

noteworthy because these companies traditionally are seen as strong competitors who keep collaboration at a minimum, but their mutual need for skilled talent brought them to the table and is driving their participation in the consortium, which now has more than 50 members. The consortium's primary goals are to:

- Identify workforce issues impacting the energy industry in Florida, including the large number of expected retirements with few prepared workers to replace them.

- Better understand existing training options as well as to identify opportunities to transfer knowledge from the existing workforce to entry-level workers.

- Bolster labor market projections about future energy workforce needs — by occupation — with real-time utility company validation and to prioritize those occupations by critical need.

- Develop a three-pronged approach to energy industry talent development. First by growing our own skilled workforce deliberately focusing on youth and career awareness of occupations in the industry. Second by attracting suitable workers from previously untapped or under-tapped labor pools. Finally by re-training workers from other industries who can transition into in-demand energy sector occupations.

As the consortium got to work, energy companies brought to our attention that it's not just more line technicians who are needed to help keep the power flowing to businesses, residences, schools, hospitals, and elsewhere, but also power plant technicians, maintenance staff at plants,

plant construction crews, and many others. Perhaps one of our industry partners best summed up the driving force that has led to this unprecedented effort in Florida to seek solutions to energy sector workforce needs when he said, “We can continue to compete for a talent puddle or work to create a talent pool.”

Before we could begin to identify ways to create this pool, we needed to better understand the current and future energy and workforce demands. Growth, of course, is at the top of this list. By 2011, Florida is on target to become the third most populous state behind California and Texas. By 2020, our state’s population is expected to top 23.5 million Floridians. We are by no means alone. Our nation’s population is projected to increase to more than 419 million by 2050, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Today and closer to home, the Southern states account for 38 percent of the U.S. population — with growth in the region outpacing national growth. Almost everyone uses power or needs it, so demand will continue to soar as will the need for additional infrastructure to generate, transmit and distribute power. According to the Florida Public Service Commission, more than 73 percent of energy in our state is generated from fossil fuels and nearly 12 percent comes from nuclear energy. Renewables account for 2 to 3 percent, but under the policies being developed and implemented under the leadership of Governor Crist, who is also a member of the Workforce Florida Board of Directors, we expect this percentage to increase. Meanwhile to meet projected power demand, energy companies have indicated to the Florida Public Service Commission their interest in bringing online up to 18 new fossil fuel units by 2015 as well as two new nuclear units beginning in 2016.

Additional major issues affecting the industry's workforce in Florida, and other states, include the aging power delivery networks that will have to be replaced; the restructuring of companies due to deregulation in the 1990s that led many utilities to cost pressures and cost reductions, especially associated with hiring, training and retaining skilled craft workers; new technology; and the anticipated wave of retirements as more than half of the industry's workers nationwide, such as line technicians and power plant operators, are scheduled to retire in the next five to 10 years. These challenges along with the limited current pipeline for entry-level workers have led to a perfect storm. Unless we undertake long-term solutions to expand the energy sector workforce, we'll face exceptional challenges to keep our lights on.

A national Black & Veatch Electric Utility Industry Survey released about a year ago found that replacing the aging workforce was the No. 1 issue of concern cited by municipal power companies and the No. 3 issue identified by investor-owned companies. Other issues at the top of the list were infrastructure and reliability. The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) in its 2007 Survey of Reliability Issues found that "the aging workforce and lack of skilled workers" is ranked first among all business issues, with the highest likelihood and highest impact on reliability. In a Florida survey, 75 percent of the state's electric companies cited the accelerated pace of retirements as a chief concern. Failing to maintain the skills of today's workforce by replacing retiring workers with competent substitutes, by training and re-training workers to keep pace with technological changes, and by capturing and transferring knowledge more effectively could affect the quality of service to consumers in Florida — and across the nation — and impact the sustainability of economic development going forward. A 2006 U.S. Department of Energy study also found that "the loss of institutional knowledge is a critical

concern, especially for a profession heavily dependent on mentoring and on-the-job training." Several of Florida's investor-owned utilities have formal knowledge-transfer initiatives in place for this very reason. One Florida company has surveyed its employees asking them to characterize their knowledge. Full certainty means they know how to do their job and why they do it. Partial certainty means they know how, but not why and conditional certainty indicates they don't know how or why, but are willing to try. On average, only half of the utility's operations and maintenance employees report "full certainty" of the required skill sets for their position. How problematic would it be to continue production with skilled talent exiting their workforce with only half reporting they have full knowledge of the required skill sets?

High-Demand Job Opportunities

With an understanding of how such critical issues affect the workforce in power operations and energy delivery now and in the future, the consortium turned to identifying the jobs in which skilled employees are most needed by our utilities, which not surprisingly mirror critical occupations of other utilities in the Southeast. What are they? In energy delivery, they are line technicians and substation technicians. In power operations, they are electricians, instruments and controls technicians, welders and power plant operators. This list of in-demand occupations also is nearly identical to a nationwide list compiled by the Center for Energy Workforce Development. The center also is beginning to focus more attention on the national need for engineers to support this sector. In fact, a 2007 Center for Energy Workforce Development survey found that among participating companies about 46 percent of employees in engineering jobs could retire beginning in 2012. I mentioned the center earlier and its support of our efforts in Florida. Ann Randazzo, the center's director, has been an active participant in our meetings. The

national center is a nonprofit consortium of electric, natural gas and nuclear utilities and their associations. It was formed about the same time as our Florida Energy Workforce Consortium and the center's research and advocacy on behalf of the workforce needs of this sector have been invaluable to us.

I can't underscore enough how critical the partnership among industry, education, economic development and workforce is in creating and sustaining a pipeline for skilled energy workers. The Florida success story would be incomplete without examining the actions taken by the industry to not just await a government solution, but to create programs and partnerships to begin to address their own needs. Florida energy companies such as Gulf Power, Florida Power & Light, Progress Energy, Ocala Electric Utility and Sumter Electric Cooperative (SECO) have initiated partnerships and created pipeline programs with secondary and post-secondary schools.

A challenge for the industry in recruiting students to participate in programs such as these is raising awareness about rewarding career opportunities in the energy sector. To recruit the desired workforce, companies will have to change their public image from one which is static to one which is more dynamic, offering challenging careers in an exciting industry. Creating awareness of jobs is essential and we can't rely on high school guidance counselors to do it for us. If we are to build a pipeline of skilled talent, we need to convince young workers that the industry is a desirable one to work for. They must understand the industry produces a commodity that is essential to society and to our quality of living. They also must be taught that those who work in the industry are environmentally responsible and that the jobs are stimulating and pay well. The Center for Energy Workforce Development has developed a website,

GetIntoEnergy.com, which acquaints young people with jobs in the industry. The website provides career assessment, determining what job suits you; it also offers a career quiz, salary comparisons, and allows you to view videos of the actual work and people doing it. It outlines the skills required for key occupations as well as education requirements and where you can go to get that education. One of the early projects of the Florida Energy Workforce Consortium was to identify all school-based energy training options in our state and to make that information available on this site. Industry job listings for Florida and other partner states also are posted on the site.

Focusing on Secondary Education Pipeline Programs

When we do engage young people who are interested in energy careers the connection is a powerful one. In North Florida, Gulf Power began its first academy in Pensacola at West Florida High School of Advanced Technology in the summer of 2001. It did so to develop a feeder pool for critical jobs such as entry-level power generation and power delivery positions as well as degreed positions such as engineers. The popular program now has expanded to two other high schools, Laurel Hill School in Laurel Hill and Locklin Tech in Milton. Gulf Power employees hold formal interviews for those students seeking entry into the academies. The curriculum is focused on industrial electricity and the electrical utility industry. Instructors use the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) electrical curriculum. In the Gulf Power program, every 11th grader is paired with a Gulf Power mentor who is in a career of interest to the student. Seniors who meet school criteria are placed in the Advanced Career Experience (ACE) program where they report to Gulf Power on alternating days during school hours for completion of their curriculum requirements and work opportunities. Graduates of this

high school program earn 15 hours of college credit and a nationally recognized NCCER industry credential. Many of the graduates are now employed by Gulf Power. Also critical to the success of any program is public accountability and the outcomes. Gulf Power uses the Edison Electric Institute pre-employment tests as a condition of hiring. In the most recent graduating class from the power academy program, the exam passage rate was 100 percent, compared to an average passage rate of 40 percent for general test-takers. The West Florida High School program has produced 62 graduates. Of those, 20 have been hired by the company into entry-level positions, 10 went to work for other utilities or related companies, 26 enrolled in college, two went into the military and four are in the Gulf Power pre-employment process.

For a more personal peek at the effectiveness of the Gulf Power Academy program at providing opportunities for a brighter future for students as well as utility companies, consider the experience of Ron, though I've changed his name to shield his privacy. Ron was initially disqualified from participating in the ACE program during his senior year because of excessive tardiness to school. Program leaders later learned his tardiness was attributable to an unstable home life. Ron had a turbulent relationship with his parents and feared for his personal safety because his father struggled with alcoholism. Ron had often been late to school because he was homeless for a period alternately living in his truck, spending the night with friends or sleeping in parks. Despite this hardship, he continued to come to school and after opening up about his difficulties, Ron appealed his ineligibility to participate in the ACE program. Following his appeal, Ron was accepted into the ACE program and successfully passed Gulf Power's pre-employment tests earning praise from the utility company's employees for his eagerness to learn, respectfulness and engaging personality. When Ron graduated from high school he was offered a

job as an apprentice line technician and he began working for Gulf Power shortly after turning 18. Just over a year after completing the Gulf Power Academy and graduating from West Florida High School, Ron closed on a three-bedroom, two-bath home and is well on his way in his career at Gulf Power. From homeless to homeowner, Ron through his experience exemplifies how relevant training and support from professionals in an industry with great earning opportunities can change your life.

In Miami Dade, Florida Power & Light has joined with Miami-Dade County Public Schools to create a two-year, dual-enrollment high school apprentice program to train future line specialists. The first class of nine graduates completed the program earlier this year. In Central Florida, Progress Energy and other utilities are working with CLM Workforce Connection, the local workforce investment board in this region, as well as the school districts in Citrus, Marion and Levy counties, in a recently opened power industry academy modeled after the Gulf Power program in North Florida. Workforce Florida awarded two grants totaling about $157,400 to support launching the new program that will train high school students and provide a pathway for careers as utility electricians, electrical engineers and electrical contractors. The Central Florida academy is taking aim at preparing students for jobs in anticipated, new power-producing plants in the region. Eighty students have signed up for the program, which also is modeled after Florida's CHOICE career academies. Part of what makes all of these programs such tremendous successes is that they emphasize industry certifications. Participants graduate not only with high school diplomas, but also with industry-awarded credentials and often college credits, at no additional charge to students or their parents. These certifications demonstrate the students are

work-ready and prepared to step into good paying jobs or to continue their education in a post-secondary setting.

In fact, these career academies — and others like them in our state that prepare students for careers in industries such as aviation, manufacturing, information technology, construction and health sciences — use rigorous and relevant industry-endorsed curriculum. They also represent a major transformation in career and technical education in Florida in part thanks to a new state law, the Career and Professional Education Act, which will lead to similar high school academies in every Florida school district to train students for careers in energy and other sectors that help drive regional economies. In our state, the work to create the CHOICE model of career and technical education and the new law that codifies this blueprint was led by state Senator Don Gaetz, a businessman and former superintendent of the Okaloosa County School District. Florida's workforce system was at the table from the beginning helping to shape the CHOICE programs led by Mary Lou Reed, executive director of the Workforce Development Board of Okaloosa and Walton Counties. Workforce Florida has awarded more than $5.1 million in grants statewide since 2005 for initiatives to replicate and support CHOICE-model career academies. Why is this important? Again, each CHOICE program is created through partnership with education, workforce, economic development and industry and provides excellent choices for future career paths whether it's a head start on college with credits already in hand or skills that allow students to enter the workforce qualified for higher wage jobs. Such preparation is critical in Florida where six out of 10 ninth graders either drop out of high school or don't go on to college even if they finish high school.

The energy sector, as we know, is among the industries that have an abundance of well-paying job and career advancement opportunities that do not require college degrees. In Florida last year, the average annual wage for electrical power line installers and repairers was $52,956; for power plant workers, $59,217; and for first-line supervisors of mechanics, installers and repairers, $64,480. The state annual average wage for all industries was about $38,500. The national annual average wage for all industries was $42,535.

Expanding the 'Pool' through Post-Secondary Initiatives

Beyond our efforts in growing talent at the secondary level, Florida energy companies also are taking action to forge stronger partnerships with post-secondary institutions to train and re-train energy workers. For example, Florida Power & Light, our state's largest utility company serving 4.4 million customer accounts, has strong partnerships with Miami Dade College and Indian River Community College for post-secondary training programs, particularly for nuclear technicians. Among Florida's newest workforce initiatives are Employ Florida Banner Centers. These centers, mostly based at Florida community colleges, are charged with developing new, cutting-edge training with industry input that is portable and can be delivered throughout the state by other community colleges, universities, vocational technical centers, private training providers and others. These centers also provide training to entry-level and advanced workers and serve as a clearinghouse for companies and job seekers in their targeted industry. Workforce Florida has awarded $8.8 million in grants to support this e^3 (employment, education and economic development) initiative. Two of the 12 new Banner Centers are designated in energy and alternative energy, based in part on the workforce needs identified by the Florida Energy Workforce Consortium. The Employ Florida Banner Center for Energy got under way this past

spring at Lake-Sumter Community College. It builds on the college's existing six-week pre-apprentice boot camp program that orients those interested in becoming line technicians with the demanding work. It also provides skills upgrade training for incumbent workers. In fact, before the consortium got under way (and later the new Banner Center for Energy), many of our utilities were recruiting line technicians from North Dakota, South Georgia, and Puerto Rico, while unaware of the home-state resource available right there at Lake-Sumter Community College. The lead instructor for Lake-Sumter's program is Bill Tyler — a 42-year veteran of the line-worker trade. Under the Banner Center for Energy initiative, Lake-Sumter Community College also has partnered with Indian River Community College to increase training opportunities and develop new curricula for power plant workers, expanding the work of Indian River's existing Power Plant Technology Institute. The Banner Center for Energy's advisory council is made up of key organizations and companies represented in the Florida Energy Workforce Consortium including the Florida Electric Cooperative Association, Florida Municipal Electric Association, Florida Power & Light, Gulf Power, Progress Energy, Jacksonville Electric Authority, Orlando Utilities Commission, Lakeland Electric, SECO and TECO Energy. In its first four months of offering training, the Banner Center trained 118 incumbent and entry-level workers in line specialist skills, directly helping at least 16 of the 18 or so people who were being introduced to the profession find employment in the industry.

In Florida, we're also beginning to examine more closely the need to fill critical professional positions such as in engineering that require post-secondary degrees. We have learned through the consortium that demand for engineers varies among utility companies. We also know that with the number of new plants on the drawing board the need for professional staff will grow.

One area that we have identified through the consortium that needs attention is strengthening articulation agreements between our secondary career academies and post-secondary institutions (both community colleges and universities). Workforce Florida also has worked with the Florida Energy Commission on its recommendations to the Florida Legislature on strategies to secure the state's energy future. Not surprising, one of the commission's recommendations is that Florida establish an Electric Power Institute within the state university system to concentrate on both undergraduate and graduate training in fuels, power technology and management. The workforce system has traditionally focused on short-term training, but it's critical that we fortify the link with our higher education partners to ensure the highly skilled engineers and other professionals required by the industry are produced in Florida and, more importantly, stay in Florida. Our higher education partners also play a critical role in the mounting focus on research and development as our state's energy policies increasingly expand beyond today's power production technologies.

The new Banner Center for Alternative Energy based at the University of Central Florida and the Florida Solar Energy Center, for example, will help ensure our state has a workforce that is equipped to seize upon opportunities created through renewable energy sources. This mission is consistent with the greener direction our state is headed led by Governor Crist, who during his first year in office has set Florida on a bold path to diversify our energy resources and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Linking Energy Companies with Qualified Candidates

Another way in which our workforce system helps to expand the talent pool for this sector is by bridging the divide between employers and qualified job candidates. Key to our comprehensive strategies for meeting the energy sector's demand for skilled talent is linking Florida companies with job seekers both through the job-matching services offered through Florida's nearly 100 one-stop centers and through our powerful online tool the Employ Florida Marketplace on the Web at EmployFlorida.com. The Marketplace website receives 3.85 million hits and has about 48,800 unique visitors daily. On it you will find registered 2.9 million job seekers and 159,000 employers seeking to connect with one another. On any given day, the site has about 285,000 job listings, including those from Florida utilities, posted on it. There are also 406,000 resumes currently available there.

We also have professional workforce experts in our one-stop centers, who are dedicated to helping sometimes untapped or under-tapped groups such as veterans. In fact, veterans represent a strong talent pool for the energy sector. We are all familiar with the many benefits of hiring veterans such as their leadership skills, ability to perform under pressure and penchant for working as a team. They also receive some of the best training while in the military and, if they weren't when they joined, they are tech savvy when they leave. To illustrate just how important the workforce system's role is in bringing companies and job candidates together allow me to briefly share the story of Gabriel Johnson.

Mr. Johnson was a nuclear-power-trained Machinist Mate Chief Petty Officer (E-7) who, as a single parent, decided to get out of the Navy to raise his two young children. He registered at the Fort Pierce One Stop Career Center for assistance with finding a job and had expressed an interest in working for Florida Power & Light at its nuclear energy plant in South Florida on Hutchinson Island. He applied online through Florida Power & Light's Web site as well as expressed interest in nuclear plant jobs in other states. He was mulling an offer in Nebraska when Larry Sowers, the regional veterans' program coordinator in the Fort Pierce one stop, reached out to a Florida Power & Light human resources manager, who had previously indicated her company's keen interest in recruiting veterans for employment openings. That intervention led to a job interview for Mr. Johnson, who was offered a maintenance supervisor position with a $75,000 annual salary. This experience also demonstrates our system's commitment through our workforce partners, such as the Fort Pierce One Stop Career Center under the Workforce Development Board of the Treasure Coast, to retaining our best talent in Florida to meet the employment needs of our key industries.

What's Ahead: Building a National Policy Blueprint

From creating new partnerships such as the Florida Energy Workforce Consortium to developing pipeline programs like the career academies and Banner Centers to leading through policy-setting as Workforce Florida has done in recognizing the energy sector as vital to our economic future and investing resources accordingly, we've indeed made significant progress in our state toward ensuring we have the reliable power resources needed to sustain our quality of life as well as our economic prosperity. Yet, we also recognize that more work remains ahead. Where do we go from here? How do we build lasting solutions for what will be long-term challenges in

meeting the demanding workforce needs for the energy sector? How do we move this workforce from a puddle to a pool? We'll continue to build on the strategies that I outlined today and seek new ones through our collaborative efforts. The momentum of our early success at building new bridges through our Florida Energy Workforce Consortium has led us to plans for our first statewide summit on the energy workforce in February 2008. We'll use this opportunity to assess our progress, set short-term and long-term goals and initiate plans to get us there. Additionally, we plan to invite some new partners to join our efforts by expanding membership in the consortium to include contractors, their associations, and labor organizations that provide contract labor that is essential to efforts at maintaining and increasing our energy infrastructure through both construction and operations. In Florida's experience are lessons and strategies that can be replicated to address the national scale of workforce challenges presented by our country's increasing energy demand — both traditional and alternative. That experience leads us to believe that any national solutions to ensuring we have a reliable workforce to provide reliable power resources should take into account the following three things:

1) Make the energy industry workforce development effort an economic development priority. This is paramount because reliable power is essential to both our quality of life and business operations and it is the backbone for any growing economy.

2) Focus on talent pipeline development and raising awareness about career opportunities in the energy sector. A key point worth remembering is that many of the in-demand jobs for this sector such as line workers, power plant mechanics and electricians are positions that are never, ever off-shored. Programs aimed at producing more entry-level talent should

emphasize skills attainment with documentable results. That is, industry-recognized certifications awarded as a result of training as productive outcomes.

3) Align investments in solutions through partnerships to reduce redundancy. Ensure that government, industry and labor are all involved in developing this critical workforce. To accomplish this, encourage collaboration among companies, educational institutions, agencies, and nonprofit organizations, which are empowered to craft solutions with the urgency to drive results. Also maximize limited public funding with leveraged private sector dollars.

Finally, in doing these three things, remember the three P's that are essential to effecting lasting solutions: partnership, pipeline and policy.

I would like to thank Ann Randazzo, Mary Lou Reed, Jennifer Grove, of Gulf Power, and Adriane Glenn Grant, of Workforce Florida, for their assistance in preparing these remarks.

Chairman Bingaman, this concludes my testimony on behalf of Workforce Florida. I want to thank you, this entire Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and your outstanding staff again for our state's participation in this hearing on this critical issue. I welcome any questions that you may have.