

Hispanics In Energy

CONFERENCE REPORT

2026 Energy Legislative Summit

Powering America's Energy Future



April 14, 2026



Edison Electric Institute, Washington, D.C.



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Edison Electric Institute, Washington, D.C.



"The energy transition will require every technology, every worker, and every region working together." ...
"Hispanic communities must have a fair share of the enormous economic opportunity created by the energy transition."

– **Joseph Dominguez, President & CEO, Constellation / Chair, Hispanics In Energy**



"Hispanics are not just participants in the energy economy—we are essential to its future success."

– **José L. Pérez, President & CEO, Hispanics In Energy**



"Collaboration between industry, government, and communities is the only way to ensure the energy transition is both fast and just."

– **Pedro Azagra, CEO, Iberdrola Group**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

On April 14, 2026, Hispanics In Energy (HIE) convened the 2026 Energy Legislative Summit at the Edison Electric Institute in Washington, D.C., bringing together more than 40 senior leaders from Congress, the federal government, major energy companies, trade associations, technology firms, academic institutions, and the Hispanic community. The daylong summit – featuring keynote presentations, CEO fireside chats, and six panel discussions – provided a national platform for examining the most urgent challenges facing the U.S. energy system while advancing a core conviction: that Hispanic Americans must be fully integrated into the policy decisions, workforce pipelines, and economic opportunities defining America's energy future. The event was livestreamed nationally and underscored the growing stature of HIE's annual summits as a critical bridge between Capitol Hill and the energy sector.

The 2026 summit convened against a backdrop of accelerating energy demand, tightening infrastructure constraints, and an administration focused on energy leadership, reliability, and affordability. Discussions ranged from grid reliability and permitting reform to workforce development, supply chain resilience, and Hispanic business access. The consensus across every session was unambiguous: the United States is in a race to build, permit, and staff the energy infrastructure its economy and national security require, and every community – especially the Hispanic community – must be fully engaged in that effort.

THE DEFINING CHALLENGE

The U.S. energy system is operating under unprecedented and sustained demand growth driven by the convergence of artificial intelligence workloads and hyperscale data centers, reindustrialization and reshoring of semiconductor and advanced materials production, electrification of transportation and buildings, and domestic expansion of liquefied natural gas, petrochemical, and refining activity. These forces, combined with climate-driven increases in peak load demand, have fundamentally changed the scale and urgency of energy system planning.

Joseph Dominguez, President and CEO of Constellation Energy and HIE Chairman, framed the central reality of the summit: "We are adding new energy sources to the grid in real time while keeping it fully reliable for households, industry, and critical infrastructure that cannot afford interruptions as we support the nation's economic growth." Representative Julie Fedorchak

(ND-At Large), speaking in a fireside chat with HIE President and CEO José L. Pérez, characterized the structural challenge in terms of three immediate priorities: stop retiring generation prematurely, optimize the use of existing assets, and accelerate investment in new capacity by removing barriers to permitting and development. Pedro Azagra, CEO of Iberdrola Group, summarized the investment imperative with equal directness: "To meet our future energy needs, we need improved permitting processes and litigation reform."

Speakers across every session converged on a single organizing insight: the constraint facing the U.S. energy system is no longer capital availability. It is the ability to execute – to move projects through permitting, connect them to the grid, and staff them with qualified workers at a speed commensurate with demand growth. As one panelist stated, "The constraint is no longer capital – it is people, skills, and speed."

KEY THEMES AND FINDINGS

Grid Reliability and the All-of-the-Above Imperative

The opening panel and multiple subsequent sessions reinforced that no single energy resource can meet the scale and variability of projected demand. Nuclear energy was consistently identified as essential for firm, always-on baseload capacity. Natural gas was described as the reliability backbone enabling the broader system to function at peak demand. Renewables and storage were recognized as important cost and flexibility tools but cannot substitute for dispatchable capacity. Hydropower was acknowledged where geographically available. Market structures were identified as a growing concern, with regulated markets viewed as better positioned to finance long-duration infrastructure than competitive markets that struggle to incentivize adequate dispatchable generation. Transmission bottlenecks and permitting delays – not fuel scarcity – were identified as the primary near-term constraints on resource adequacy.

Permitting Reform as Priority

Permitting reform was consistently cited as a priority across panels and remarks. Speakers described a system in which projects that should take one to two years routinely take five to ten, adding billions in cost and delaying critical capacity additions. Representative Fedorchak was direct: "We've got to get permitting reform done... our country needs more power, and in order to get more power, we need to make it easier for companies to build it." Representative Henry Cuellar (TX-28) reinforced this in his spotlight address, warning that delays are passed on to consumers and undermine domestic competitiveness. Panelists across the summit pointed to NEPA streamlining, interagency coordination reform, and litigation certainty as the specific levers that would most immediately accelerate deployment.

Workforce Shortages as a Binding Constraint

Workforce availability was identified in every session as a constraint of equal urgency to permitting. The energy sector faces structural shortages of electricians, lineworkers, welders, nuclear technicians, pipefitters, and engineers across every segment of the value chain. Randall Stamper of the Virginia Community College System stated that the training system could quadruple its output and still not meet demand. Missy Henriksen of the Center for Energy Workforce Development emphasized that "we need all of the welders, the engineers, the electricians, the pipefitters." Representative Fedorchak framed the workforce challenge as tied for the most urgent constraint alongside permitting, emphasizing the need to redirect students into the trades.

Hispanic workers already represent a substantial and growing share of the energy construction, utility operations, and clean energy installation workforce. Speakers throughout the summit emphasized that this demographic reality makes the expansion of Latino workforce pipelines not merely an equity goal but a national economic imperative. Suzanna Valdez Wolfe, CEO of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, was unequivocal: "It's not Latino talent. It's the best talent in the country."

Hispanic Business Access and Supply Chain Inclusion

Panel 5 addressed a persistent structural gap: Hispanic-owned businesses are substantially underrepresented in energy supply chains despite the sector's dependence on the communities they serve. Panelists identified access to capital as the primary barrier, with Ramiro Cavazos of the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce describing capital as "the pot of gold – and the biggest barrier." Speakers also identified procurement complexity, contracting system opacity, and limited early engagement with large utilities and federal agencies as compounding obstacles. The panel was equally clear that inclusion in energy supply chains is not a charitable objective but a strategic necessity – supply chain constraints in transformers, cables, and critical components are already slowing deployment and increasing costs, and Hispanic-owned firms represent an underutilized capacity pool.

AI, Innovation, and Digital Transformation

Artificial intelligence emerged as both the primary driver of demand growth and a transformative tool for grid operations and workforce productivity. Chair Dominguez described AI-driven hyperscale data centers as a structural demand shock that is reshaping utility planning timelines from five-year cycles to six-month strategies. At the same time, speakers highlighted that AI is already being applied to hydro dispatch optimization, nuclear fuel management, outage prediction, and interconnection planning. Pedro Azagra of Iberdrola was direct in his advice to the workforce: "Do not avoid AI. This is not an issue – this is an opportunity." Panelists consistently agreed that AI will reshape rather than eliminate workforce

needs, increasing demand for hybrid technical roles combining traditional trades knowledge with digital systems literacy.

Community Engagement and Trust

Panel 2 reinforced that the success of major energy and digital infrastructure projects increasingly depends on early, sustained, and culturally competent community engagement. Technology company representatives from Google and Microsoft described engagement as a full project lifecycle function beginning at conception, not a permitting-stage obligation. Community and civic leaders warned that delayed or transactional outreach significantly increases opposition, cost, and regulatory risk. Mary Ann Gomez Orta of the Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute identified declining civic literacy and fragmented information ecosystems as compounding barriers, noting that communities are increasingly shaped by incomplete or misleading digital content on complex infrastructure questions.

THE 2026 POLICY AGENDA

The summit produced a coherent and specific set of federal policy requests, presented in alignment with the administration's priorities of energy leadership, reliability, and affordability. Hispanics In Energy is asking for the following actions:

First, the establishment of a formal DOE-Hispanic Energy Advisory Council to support implementation of national energy expansion and workforce strategies, ensuring that Hispanic expertise and community perspectives are integrated into federal planning at the highest level.

Second, the expansion of workforce funding tied directly to shovel-ready energy infrastructure projects, ensuring that apprenticeship and training programs are aligned with real-time labor demand rather than lagging behind project timelines.

Third, increased federal investment in Hispanic-Serving Institutions and technical colleges to scale energy workforce production at the national level, recognizing that HSIs are among the most cost-effective workforce pipelines for the trades and engineering roles the sector requires.

Fourth, procurement access reforms ensuring that Hispanic-owned businesses can compete in and benefit from federal and utility energy infrastructure spending, including simplified contracting pathways, mentorship programs, and technical assistance.

Fifth, the establishment of data-driven accountability frameworks to measure workforce participation, project delivery timelines, and supply chain inclusion across federal energy programs, providing a basis for continuous improvement and transparent reporting.

Highlight clips of the 2026 Energy Legislative Summit are available [on the Hispanics In Energy website](#). A complete report as well as a summary for each panel a session are set forth below

INTRODUCTION

On April 14, 2026, **Hispanics in Energy** (HIE) orchestrated the **2026 Energy Legislative Summit: Powering America's Energy Future** hosted by the Edison Electric Institute (EEI) in Washington, D.C.

The daylong event, which featured keynote presentations and panel discussions with Congressional members and top-level utility and energy executives, was intended to provide a factual backdrop for—and to facilitate productive discourse regarding—the urgent need for greater Hispanic equity in our nation's energy sector. The event was livestreamed to viewers around the country, highlight clips of the Energy Legislative Summit can be found here on the HIE website.

BACKGROUND

The Hispanics In Energy Legislative Summits in Washington, D.C. are annual, high-level convenings that bring together leaders from government, industry, academia, and the Hispanic community to shape U.S. energy policy while advancing inclusion in one of the nation's most critical economic sectors.

Held at prominent venues such as the U.S. Department of Energy, these summits serve as a national platform for dialogue on the future of energy, with a particular focus on ensuring that Hispanic Americans are fully represented in policy discussions, workforce development, and economic opportunities tied to the energy transition.

Across recent years, the summits have centered on themes such as energy equity, workforce development, clean energy deployment, and the role of federal policy in shaping markets and investment. For example, the 2024 summit focused on "Equity for Hispanics in America's Energy Transition," emphasizing how federal initiatives and industry investments can better include Hispanic communities in emerging opportunities.

The events typically feature keynote addresses from Members of Congress, senior officials from the Department of Energy, and executives from major energy companies, alongside panels on topics such as the Inflation Reduction Act, grid reliability, supply chains, and Hispanic-serving institutions. These discussions highlight both the challenges and opportunities facing the energy sector, including the need to expand workforce pipelines, increase supplier diversity, and strengthen public-private partnerships.

A core objective of the summits is to build pathways for Hispanic participation in energy careers and leadership. Through collaboration with organizations like the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities and industry partners, the summits promote STEM education, internships, and professional development opportunities to help close representation gaps.

The most recent summits, including the 2026 gathering in Washington, D.C., have expanded the conversation to include grid reliability, innovation, and the workforce needed to support rapid growth in electricity demand and new technologies. These events bring together policymakers and industry leaders to align on practical solutions and long-term strategies for powering the nation's energy future.

Overall, the Hispanics In Energy Legislative Summits function as a critical bridge between Capitol Hill and the energy sector, advancing policies and partnerships that promote reliability, affordability, and innovation while ensuring that Hispanic communities play a central role in America's energy future.

2026 PARTICIPANTS AND HONOREES

Over 40 leaders from the U.S. government, business and academia participated in the daylong event.

Featured guest speakers:

- **The Honorable Julie Fedorchak, United States Representative (ND-At Large)**
- **The Honorable Henry Cuellar, United States Representative (TX-28)**
- **Joseph Domínguez, Chairman, HIE and President and CEO, Constellation Energy**
- **Pedro Azagra, CEO, Iberdrola Group**
- **José L. Pérez, President and CEO, Hispanics in Energy**

Guest speakers/panelists:

- Kiel Weaver, Chief Advocacy Officer, Edison Electric Institute
- Lewis Binswanger, Energy Executive (Retired), Vice Chair, Hispanics In Energy
- Tony Clark, Executive Director, National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners
- Sheri Givens, President & CEO, Smart Electric Power Alliance
- Michael J. Flannigan, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs, Nuclear Energy Institute
- John Dabbar, Executive Director, National Petroleum Council
- Brad Viator, President, Power for Tomorrow
- Frederick Pfaeffle Arana, President & CEO, Energy Partners Solutions
- Erica Bernal-Martinez, CEO, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials
- Mary Ann Gomez Orta, President & CEO, Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute
- Patricia D'Costa, Commercial Structuring Lead, Clean Energy & Power, Google
- Suhail Khan, Senior Director for External Affairs, Microsoft

- Zack Valdez, Ph.D., Sr. Director, Industry and Regulatory Affairs, National Electrical Manufacturers Association
- Deveshwar Singh, Ph.D., Founder, Dharti AI
- Gabriel Chavez, Nuclear Project Management, Burns & McDonnell
- Marco V. Ávila, Vice President, WSP
- Luis Ortiz, Ph.D., Deputy Director for Commercialization, Advanced Research Projects Agency Energy (ARPA-E), U.S. Department of Energy
- Maria Pia Tamburri, Vice President of Intergovernmental Affairs and Economic Development, Dominion Energy
- The Honorable Nelson A. Díaz, Board Member, Exelon & PECO (Retired); Former Vice Chair, PREPA; Co-founder, LCDA; Vice Chair & Co-founder, Hispanics In Energy
- Deanna Rodriguez, President & CEO, Entergy New Orleans
- Dennis V. Arriola, Operating Partner, Sandbrook Capital; Former CEO, Avangrid
- The Honorable James E. Campos, President, Red Post Energy Futures
- Lance Medlin, CEO, Red Post Energy Group
- Julianne Szyper, Nuclear Policy Expert, Former Deputy Director of Energy, Commonwealth of Virginia
- The Honorable Odogwu Obi Linton, Commissioner, Maryland Public Service Commission
- Jose Niño, Chair, Biofriendly; Board Member, Hispanics In Energy
- Ramiro A. Cavazos, President & CEO, United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Illary Archilla, Founder & CEO, Terravanta Inc.
- Diana Gomez, Board Member, Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers
- Raul E. Jurado, President, Compendious IT Solutions
- Deanna Rodriguez, CEO Entergy New Orleans/ Director, Hispanics In Energy
- Missy Henriksen, Executive Director, Center for Energy Workforce Development
- Dave Tamayo, President of the Board of Directors, Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD)
- Suzanna Valdez Wolfe, CEO, Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers
- Randall Stamper, Associate Vice Chancellor, Career Education and Workforce Programs, Virginia Community College System
- Jeyben Castro, Community Outreach and Engagement Director, U.S. House of Representatives
- Kym Bolado, President & CEO, SHALE Magazine
- Katerina Huertas, Energy Attorney & Policy Advisor, Puerto Rico

Recognition Awards:

- Pedro Azagra, CEO, Iberdrola Group

Recognition of New Hispanics In Energy State Chapters:

- Texas: Kym Bolado, President and CEO, SHALE Magazine
- Puerto Rico: Katerina Huertas, Energy Attorney & Policy Advisor, Puerto Rico

THE CHALLENGE

The U.S. energy system is operating under unprecedented and sustained demand growth driven by rapid electrification, industrial reshoring, data center expansion, artificial intelligence compute loads, transportation electrification, and domestic manufacturing growth. These forces, combined with continued population growth in key metropolitan regions, have fundamentally changed the scale and urgency of energy system planning.

At the same time, federal energy policy priorities under the Trump Administration, including those advanced by the President and Secretary of Energy Chris Wright, have emphasized energy abundance, reliability, affordability, and American energy leadership. This policy direction reflects a growing consensus across industry that economic competitiveness depends on rapidly expanding all forms of energy supply, including oil and gas, nuclear, renewables, and emerging technologies, while streamlining permitting and strengthening domestic infrastructure resilience.

As discussed throughout the Hispanics In Energy Legislative Summit, the defining challenge is no longer whether demand will grow—it is how quickly the United States can build, permit, and staff the infrastructure required to meet it.

One speaker summarized the urgency bluntly: “We are no longer planning for future demand—we are already behind today’s demand curve.”

Joseph Dominguez, President and CEO of Constellation Energy and HIE Chairman, emphasized that reliability is now the central constraint: “We are adding new energy sources to the grid in real time while keeping it fully reliable for households, industry, and critical infrastructure that cannot afford interruptions as we support the nation’s economic growth.”

CURRENT STATE

The U.S. energy sector in 2026 reflects both extraordinary opportunity and structural strain. Demand growth is being driven by multiple converging factors:

- Artificial intelligence and hyperscale data centers requiring continuous, high-density electricity supply
- Reindustrialization and reshoring of manufacturing, including semiconductor and advanced materials production
- Electrification of transportation fleets and logistics systems
- Expansion of domestic LNG, petrochemical, and refining activity
- Continued electrification of residential and commercial buildings
- Climate-driven increases in peak load demand due to extreme heat events

As a result, grid operators, utilities, and regulators are increasingly focused on capacity adequacy, interconnection reform, and transmission expansion timelines.

Hispanic and Latino workers remain a critical component of the energy workforce, representing a substantial share of construction, utility operations, pipeline infrastructure, and increasingly clean energy installation and manufacturing roles. However, workforce shortages have become more acute across nearly every segment of the energy value chain.

Despite increased federal and private-sector investment, persistent gaps remain:

- Insufficient pipeline of electricians, welders, technicians, and engineers
- Underfunded Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) relative to workforce demand
- Limited Hispanic representation in senior leadership and regulatory decision-making roles
- Barriers to entry for Hispanic-owned businesses in large-scale energy procurement
- Mismatch between rapid technological change (AI, automation, grid digitization) and training systems

As one panelist noted, “The constraint is no longer capital—it is people, skills, and speed.”

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Across the Summit, speakers emphasized that the United States must adopt an “energy abundance and execution-first” mindset aligned with federal priorities focused on reliability, permitting reform, and domestic capacity expansion.

Key solutions included:

1. **Workforce Expansion at Industrial Scale**
Accelerate apprenticeships, credentialing, and earn-and-learn models aligned with national energy buildout priorities. Expand partnerships between utilities, labor unions, and community colleges to rapidly scale electricians, lineworkers, nuclear technicians, and engineers.
2. **Permitting and Infrastructure Acceleration**
Support federal and state efforts to streamline permitting timelines for transmission, generation, and critical infrastructure while maintaining safety and environmental standards. Industry leaders consistently linked permitting reform to affordability and reliability outcomes.
3. **Strengthening Energy Education Pipelines**
Integrate energy career pathways into K-12 and postsecondary systems through statewide adoption of energy-focused career clusters and technical education expansion, ensuring early exposure to energy careers.
4. **Scaling Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs)**
Increase investment in HSIs as core workforce engines for engineering, trades, and energy technology programs aligned with national infrastructure needs.

5. Expanding Domestic Energy Supply Chains
Support policies that incentivize domestic manufacturing of energy components, grid equipment, transformers, and critical minerals processing to reduce supply chain vulnerability.
6. Expanding Small and Hispanic-Owned Business Participation
Increase access to federal and utility procurement opportunities, including simplified contracting pathways, mentorship programs, and technical assistance for energy infrastructure projects.

THE 'ASK'

Hispanics In Energy continues to advocate for a structured federal-industry framework to ensure communities are fully integrated into the national energy expansion agenda.

In alignment with current federal priorities focused on energy leadership, reliability, and affordability, the 2026 policy asks include:

1. Engagement with top energy executives, government officials, regulators and to help shape policy and investments.
2. Expansion of workforce funding tied directly to shovel-ready energy infrastructure projects, ensuring training aligns with real-time labor demand, including by accelerating apprenticeships, credentialing, and earn-and-learn models aligned with national energy buildout priorities. These efforts would include expanding partnerships between utilities, labor unions, and community colleges to rapidly scale electricians, lineworkers, nuclear technicians, and engineers.
3. Increased investment in educational institutions, including HSIs, technical colleges, and apprenticeship programs to scale energy workforce production at national levels.
4. Procurement access reforms to ensure small businesses can compete in and benefit from federal and utility energy infrastructure spending.
5. Data-driven accountability frameworks to measure workforce and leadership participation, project delivery timelines, and supply chain inclusion across federal energy programs.

José L. Pérez, President and CEO of Hispanics In Energy, summarized the central message of the Summit: "America's energy future will be defined by execution—and execution requires every community, especially the Hispanic community, to be fully engaged, fully trained, and fully included."

The 2026 consensus across policymakers, regulators, and industry leaders is clear: the United States is in an era of accelerating energy demand, constrained workforce supply, and urgent infrastructure expansion. Meeting that challenge will require aligning policy, permitting,

capital, and talent at a scale and speed not previously achieved in the modern energy economy.

2026 Energy Legislative Summit Agenda:

9:00 am: Registration/Networking Coffee

9:20 am: Welcome Remarks:

- José L. Pérez, President & CEO, Hispanics In Energy - Master of Ceremony
- Kiel Weaver, Chief Advocacy Officer, Edison Electric Institute

9:25 am: Panel 1: Diverse Baseload that leads to Grid Reliability: Flexibility, Affordability, and Near-Term System Needs

Moderator: Lewis Binswanger, Energy Executive (Retired), Vice Chair, Hispanics In Energy

Panelists:

- Tony Clark, Executive Director, National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners
- Sheri Givens, President & CEO, Smart Electric Power Alliance
- Michael J. Flannigan, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs Nuclear Energy Institute
- John Dabbar, Executive Director, National Petroleum Council
- Brad Viator, President, Power for Tomorrow

10:30 am: Fireside Chat:

- José L. Pérez, President & CEO, Hispanics In Energy
- The Honorable Julie Fedorchak, United States Representative, (ND-At Large)

10:55 am: Panel 2: Community Engagement and Investment in the Energy sector

Moderator: Frederick Pfaeffle Arana, President & CEO, Energy Partners Solutions

Panelists:

- Erica Bernal-Martinez, CEO, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials
- Mary Ann Gomez Orta, President & CEO, Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute
- Patricia D'Costa, Commercial Structuring Lead, Clean Energy & Power, Google
- Suhail Khan, Senior Director for External Affairs, Microsoft

11:45 am: Panel 3: Innovation in the Energy Industry: Deployment Readiness Across the Energy Portfolio

Moderator: Zack Valdez, Ph.D., Sr. Director, Industry and Regulatory Affairs, National Electrical Manufacturers Association

Panelists:

- Deveshwar Singh, Ph.D., Founder, Dharti AI
- Gabriel Chavez, Nuclear Project Management, Burns & McDonnell
- Marco V. Ávila, Vice President, WSP
- Luis Ortiz, Ph.D., Deputy Director for Commercialization, Advanced Research Projects Agency Energy (ARPA-E), U.S. Department of Energy

12:30 pm: Business Lunch

12:50 pm: Keynote Speaker: Joseph Dominguez, President & CEO, Constellation Chair, Hispanics In Energy

1:00 pm: CEO Fireside Chat: Leadership, Reliability, and the Future of Energy

HIE Board Members

Moderator: Maria Pia Tamburri, Vice President of Intergovernmental Affairs and Economic Development, Dominion Energy

Panelists:

- Joseph Dominguez, President & CEO, Constellation
- The Honorable Nelson A. Díaz, Board Member, Exelon & PECO (Retired), Former Vice Chair, PREPA, Co-founder, LCDA, Vice Chair & Co-founder, Hispanics In Energy
- Deanna Rodriguez, President & CEO, Entergy New Orleans
- Dennis V. Arriola, Operating Partner, Sandbrook Capital; Former CEO, Avangrid; Board Member of ConocoPhillips, Commercial Metals Company (CMC), Meritage Homes, Auto Club of Southern California, and United Utility

1:45 pm: Spotlight Speaker: Pedro Azagra, CEO, Iberdrola Group

1:55 pm: Panel 4: Energy Reality: Looking at the Next Ten Years

Moderator: The Honorable James E. Campos, President, Red Post Energy Futures

Panelists:

- Lance Medlin, CEO, Red Post Energy Group
- The Honorable Odogwu Obi Linton, Maryland Public Service Commission
- Julianne Szyper, Nuclear Policy Expert, Former Deputy Director of Energy, Commonwealth of Virginia

2:50 pm: Panel 5: Energy Supply Chains: Expanding Opportunities for Hispanic-Owned Businesses

Moderator: [Jose Niño](#), Chair, Biofriendly / Board Member, Hispanics In Energy

Panelists:

- [Ramiro A. Cavazos](#), President & CEO, United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- [Illary Archilla](#), Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Terravanta Inc.
- [Diana Gomez](#), Board Member, Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers
- [Raul E. Jurado](#), President, Compendious IT Solutions

3:35 pm: Networking Coffee Break**3:50 pm: Panel 6: Building a Workforce That Delivers: Apprenticeships, Credentials, and the Jobs-to-Projects Pipeline**

Moderator: [Deanna Rodriguez](#), CEO, Entergy New Orleans/ Director, Hispanics In Energy

Panelists:

- [Missy Henriksen](#), Executive Director, Center for Energy Workforce Development
- [Dave Tamayo](#), President of the Board of Directors, Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD)
- [Suzanna Valdez Wolfe](#), CEO, Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE)
- [Randall Stamper](#), Associate Vice Chancellor, Career Education and Workforce Programs, Virginia Community College System
- [Jeyben Castro](#), Community Outreach and Engagement Director, U.S. House of Representatives

4:40 pm: Spotlight Speaker: [The Honorable Henry Cuellar](#), United States Representative, (TX-28)**4:50 pm: Perspectives from Moderators:**

- **Panel 1:** [Lewis Binswanger](#), Energy Executive (Retired), Vice Chair, Hispanics In Energy
- **Panel 2:** [Frederick Pfaeffle Arana](#), President & CEO, Energy Partners Sol
- **Panel 3:** [Zack Valdez, Ph.D.](#), Sr. Director, Industry and Regulatory Affairs, National Electrical Manufacturers Association
- **Panel 4:** [The Honorable James E. Campos](#), President, Red Post Energy Futures
- **Panel 5:** [Jose Niño](#), Chair, Biofriendly / Board Member, Hispanics In Energy
- **Panel 6:** [Deanna Rodriguez](#), CEO, Entergy New Orleans/ Director, Hispanics In Energy
- **CEO Chat:** [Maria Pia Tamburri](#), Vice President of Intergovernmental Affairs and Economic Development, Dominion Energy

5:30 pm: Reception: District Still & Supply in the National Union Building

918 F St NW, Washington, DC 20004

Recognition Awards

- **Pedro Azagra**, CEO, Iberdrola Group

Recognition of New Hispanics In Energy State Chapters

- **Texas:** **Kym Bolado**, President and CEO, SHALE Magazine
- **Puerto Rico:** **Katerina Huertas**, Energy Attorney & Policy Advisor, Puerto Rico

**2026 Energy Legislative Summit Presentation Summaries
by Panel to follow:**

Panel 1: Diverse Baseload that leads to Grid Reliability: Flexibility, Affordability, and Near-Term System Needs ([Video Link](#))



(Panel 1 speakers, from left: John Dabbar, Sheri Givens, Michael J. Flannigan, Tony Clark, Brad Viator, and Lewis Binswanger)

Moderator: [Lewis Binswanger](#), Energy Executive (Retired), Vice Chair, Hispanics In Energy

Panelists:

- [Tony Clark](#), Executive Director, National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners
- [Sheri Givens](#), President & CEO, Smart Electric Power Alliance
- [Michael J. Flannigan](#), Senior Vice President of Government Affairs Nuclear Energy Institute
- [John Dabbar](#), Executive Director, National Petroleum Council
- [Brad Viator](#), President, Power for Tomorrow

This panel underscored that the U.S. power system is entering a structurally constrained period defined by rapidly accelerating electricity demand, tightening reserve margins, and intensifying affordability pressures. These conditions are driven by artificial intelligence workloads, data center expansion, electrification, and renewed domestic industrial growth. As multiple speakers emphasized, the energy transition is no longer a long-term planning exercise—it is a real-time reliability challenge.

Lewis Binswanger, Moderator and Vice Chair of Hispanics In Energy, framed the discussion around immediacy, noting that “reliability is no longer an abstract policy goal—it is a daily operating requirement for the grid under unprecedented stress.”

Tony Clark, Executive Director of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, emphasized the regulatory challenge of balancing cost and reliability: “Every decision we make now has a direct impact on affordability for families who are already stretched by rising energy costs.”

Sheri Givens, President & CEO of the Smart Electric Power Alliance, highlighted the system transformation underway, stating that “we are not managing incremental change anymore—we are managing a full redesign of how electricity is generated, delivered, and consumed.”

Michael J. Flannigan, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs at the Nuclear Energy Institute, stressed the importance of firm clean capacity, noting that “nuclear energy remains one of the only scalable sources of always-on, carbon-free power capable of meeting growing baseload demand.”

John Dabbar, Executive Director of the National Petroleum Council, emphasized the continued importance of natural gas in system reliability, stating that “natural gas is not a transition fuel in the traditional sense—it is a reliability backbone that allows everything else on the system to function when demand peaks.”

Brad Viator, President of Power for Tomorrow, reinforced the need for pragmatic energy policy, noting that “the grid does not care about ideology—it cares about whether the electrons are there when people flip the switch.”

The panel reached broad consensus that no single energy resource can meet the scale and variability of future demand. Instead, reliability requires a diversified “all-of-the-above” portfolio that includes nuclear for firm baseload, natural gas for flexible dispatchability, hydropower where geographically available, and renewables and storage for cost and flexibility optimization.

A recurring theme was that grid reliability is increasingly being challenged not by generation scarcity alone, but by infrastructure constraints, permitting delays, and transmission bottlenecks that prevent energy from reaching demand centers.

Panelists also highlighted growing concern over market design structures. Regulated markets were viewed as better positioned to plan and finance long-duration infrastructure investments, while competitive markets face challenges in incentivizing sufficient dispatchable capacity. As one speaker summarized, “Markets are signaling scarcity, but not always delivering new capacity at the speed required.”

Affordability emerged as a central policy concern. The panel emphasized that large new electricity loads—particularly data centers and industrial facilities—must be integrated into cost allocation frameworks that ensure they pay their proportional share of grid expansion costs. Without such alignment, existing customers risk bearing disproportionate rate increases.

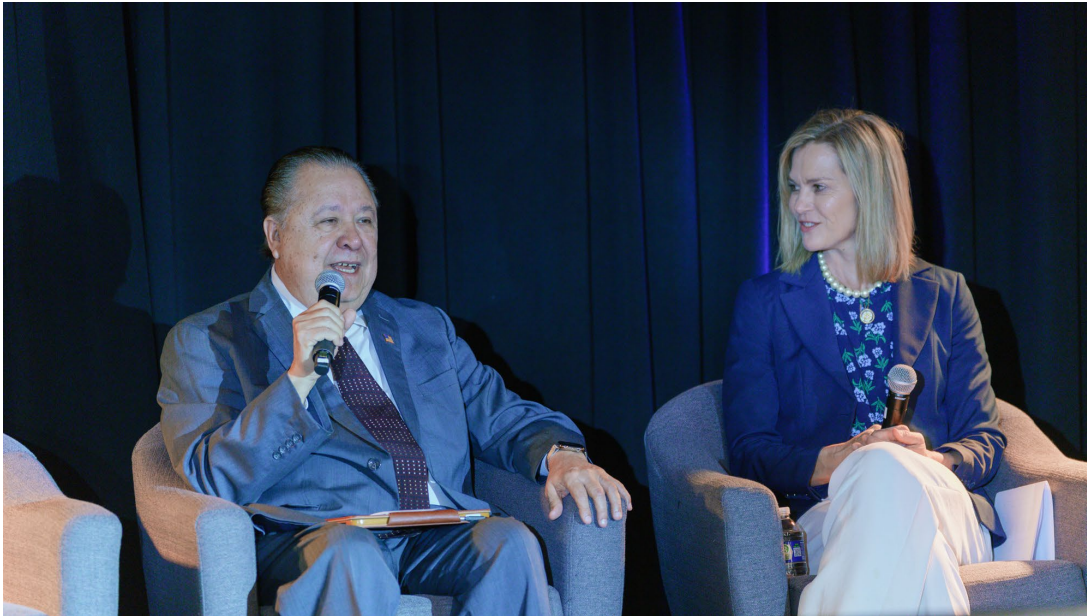
Infrastructure development challenges were also highlighted, particularly transmission expansion delays, natural gas pipeline constraints, and aging distribution systems. As one

participant noted, “We are trying to build a 21st-century grid on 20th-century infrastructure timelines.”

Demand-side resources such as energy efficiency, demand response, and virtual power plants were recognized as valuable tools for reducing peak load pressure. However, speakers consistently emphasized that these tools are supplemental rather than substitutes for firm, dispatchable generation.

Finally, the panel stressed a growing disconnect between infrastructure investment needs and public understanding. Several speakers noted that customers often do not fully understand the tradeoffs between reliability, affordability, and system expansion requirements. As Tony Clark observed, “We cannot build the grid of the future without bringing customers along in the conversation about what it costs to keep the lights on.”

This insight directly aligns with the mission of Hispanics In Energy to ensure that underserved communities are not only beneficiaries of the energy system but informed participants in its development.

Fireside Chat ([Video Link](#))

(Fireside Chat speakers, from left: José L. Pérez and Rep. Julie Fedorchak (R-ND))

- José L. Pérez, President & CEO, Hispanics In Energy
- The Honorable Julie Fedorchak, United States Representative, (ND-At Large)

This conversation between José L. Pérez, President & CEO of Hispanics In Energy, and The Honorable Julie Fedorchak, United States Representative (ND-At Large), centered on the core constraints shaping U.S. grid reliability and affordability in a period of rapidly rising demand. The discussion underscored that the primary barriers are no longer fuel availability, but permitting delays, workforce shortages, and policy misalignment. These challenges directly align with the mission of Hispanics In Energy to expand access to energy careers, strengthen workforce pipelines, and ensure that Hispanic and underserved communities participate in and benefit from energy system growth. A consistent theme was that reliability today depends as much on execution capacity—people, permitting, and policy—as it does on physical infrastructure.

Representative Fedorchak emphasized permitting reform as the most urgent federal priority, stating, “We’ve got to get permitting reform done... our country needs more power, and in order to get more power, we need to make it easier for companies to build it.” She characterized the current system as “too hard to build, too complicated, too expensive, and it takes too long,” noting that these barriers are constraining generation, transmission, and fuel infrastructure at precisely the moment demand is accelerating.

She framed grid reliability around a “stabilize, optimize, grow” approach. On immediate reliability risks, she warned, “Stop retiring things... we have barely enough power to meet demand today,” stressing the importance of preserving existing generation. On system efficiency, she added, “Make the most use out of what we already have... there’s more power we could get out of existing plants.” Looking forward, she argued that the system must “make it easier, faster, more certain for companies to invest and build new power,” reinforcing the need for durable investment conditions to support long-term growth.

Affordability was presented as largely policy-driven rather than demand-driven. Representative Fedorchak stated, “It’s been our own policies that have pushed us away from affordability,” highlighting how simultaneous retirement of dispatchable resources and costly replacement buildout has increased rates. She also challenged assumptions about load growth, noting, “Large loads... if you’re doing it right... should help drop prices,” suggesting that properly structured demand—such as data centers and industrial expansion—can improve system economics when aligned with infrastructure investment.

Cost allocation was identified as a key tool for maintaining affordability. Representative Fedorchak emphasized that large energy users are willing to pay their share, stating, “They want to pay their full costs... to provide the power and infrastructure to serve them.” This reflects an emerging policy direction toward assigning incremental infrastructure costs to new load growth, helping to prevent cost shifts onto existing residential customers.

Workforce constraints emerged as an equally critical bottleneck. Representative Fedorchak noted, “The workforce is probably... tied for the biggest challenge... trying to get things done,” and emphasized the need to “redirect students into the trades.” This aligns directly with Hispanics In Energy’s mission to expand access to technical careers and strengthen pathways into engineering, construction, and utility operations roles essential for energy system buildout.

On pricing, she cautioned that near-term relief is limited, stating, “You’re paying for the policies that were approved... those costs are baked into your rates,” reinforcing that current investment cycles and policy decisions will continue to influence customer bills in the short term.

Overall, the discussion made clear that the U.S. energy system is entering a constrained growth phase where reliability depends on aligning policy, permitting, and workforce capacity with accelerating demand. As Representative Fedorchak summarized, “our country needs more power... for national security reasons, for economic growth, for stability,” but the system remains constrained by structural barriers to building infrastructure at speed and scale.

Panel 2: Community Engagement and Investment in the Energy sector [\(Video Link\)](#)



(Panel 2 speakers, from left: Mary Ann Gomez Orta, Patricia D'Costa, Erica Bernal-Martinez, Suhail Khan, and Frederick Pfaeffle Arana)

Moderator: Frederick Pfaeffle Arana, President & CEO, Energy Partners Solutions

Panelists:

- Erica Bernal-Martinez, CEO, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials
- Mary Ann Gomez Orta, President & CEO, Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute
- Patricia D'Costa, Commercial Structuring Lead, Clean Energy & Power, Google
- Suhail Khan, Senior Director for External Affairs, Microsoft

This panel emphasized that community engagement has become a decisive factor in energy and digital infrastructure development, particularly as AI-driven data centers, grid modernization, and clean energy investments accelerate. Speakers highlighted that trust, early engagement, and culturally competent outreach are now essential to project success. The discussion aligns closely with the mission of Hispanics In Energy by reinforcing the need to expand Latino participation in energy decision-making, strengthen workforce and civic literacy, and ensure that Hispanic communities are active partners in shaping—not merely responding to—the energy transition.

Moderated by Frederick Pfaeffle Arana, President & CEO of Energy Partners Solutions, the panel brought together leaders from government, technology, and community organizations

to examine how infrastructure growth can be aligned with public trust and local benefit. Across sectors, speakers agreed that traditional engagement models are no longer sufficient given the scale and speed of today's energy and data infrastructure expansion.

The panel reinforced that the success of modern energy and digital infrastructure projects depends as much on trust and engagement as on engineering and capital investment. As AI-driven demand and grid expansion accelerate, meaningful community participation—especially in Hispanic and underserved communities—will be essential to ensuring that the energy transition is both durable and equitable, consistent with the mission of Hispanics In Energy.

Key Themes and Discussion Highlights:

1. Community engagement as a full project lifecycle function

Patricia D'Costa, Commercial Structuring Lead, Clean Energy & Power at Google, stressed that engagement must begin at project conception and continue through operations, stating, "We include local community engagement throughout the lifecycle... from site design to permitting to construction and operations." She emphasized that companies must function as "good neighbors," investing in local infrastructure such as roads, water systems, and grid upgrades. She also highlighted regulatory participation, structured energy contracting, and procurement standards as tools to embed community benefit expectations early.

She further noted, "Being able to address critical issues early and find mutually beneficial solutions is essential," underscoring that engagement is not optional but foundational to project execution.

2. Trust deficits and breakdowns in civic information systems.

Mary Ann Gomez Orta, President & CEO, Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute, highlighted declining institutional trust and fragmented information ecosystems. She warned that many communities are now shaped by incomplete or misleading digital content, stating, "We have largely abandoned frameworks for civic education and engagement... people are being informed by 30-second videos of complex policy issues."

She also emphasized leadership realism in public engagement: "The key to being a good leader is understanding the rate of disappointment that people can handle," noting that transparency is critical to maintaining credibility in infrastructure decisions.

3. Scale of AI infrastructure and local impacts.

Suhail Khan, Senior Director for External Affairs, Microsoft, described the unprecedented scale of AI-driven data center growth, noting increased energy and water intensity and rising community resistance, including project moratoriums. He stated, "This is life-changing

technology, and yet there is a disconnect between what people use daily and what they believe they want in their communities.”

He emphasized that long-term viability depends on ensuring projects are “a net positive to the local community over its lifetime,” including job creation, tax revenue, and grid investment.

4. Latino community engagement and inclusion strategies

Erica Bernal-Martinez, CEO, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO), stressed that engagement must be sustained, proactive, and culturally grounded. She cautioned that delayed outreach significantly increases project costs and opposition, stating, “If you wait until the end, it’s going to be triple the cost and twice the resistance.”

She reinforced that “engagement is not only when you need a vote—it has to be year-round,” highlighting the importance of continuous relationship-building in Latino and underserved communities.

5. Decision-making dynamics: voice, vote, and veto.

Panelists discussed the distinctions between community influence and formal decision authority. An infrastructure executive noted, “Democracy is messy, but it requires participation—sometimes imperfect decisions are part of the process.” A civic engagement leader added, “You can have a voice, a vote, and sometimes a veto—but they are not the same thing,” emphasizing the importance of managing expectations and clarifying decision pathways in infrastructure development.

Panel 3: Innovation in the Energy Industry: Deployment Readiness Across the Energy Portfolio [\(Video Link\)](#)



(Panel 3 speakers, from left: Luis Ortiz, Ph.D., Deveshwar Singh, Ph.D., Marco V. Ávila, Gabriel Chavez, and Zack Valdez, Ph.D.)

Moderator: [Zack Valdez, Ph.D.](#), Sr. Director, Industry and Regulatory Affairs, National Electrical Manufacturers Association

Panelists:

- [Deveshwar Singh, Ph.D.](#), Founder, Dharti AI
- [Gabriel Chavez](#), Nuclear Project Management, Burns & McDonnell
- [Marco V. Ávila](#), Vice President, WSP
- [Luis Ortiz, Ph.D.](#), Deputy Director for Commercialization, Advanced Research Projects Agency Energy (ARPA-E), U.S. Department of Energy

This panel examined the systemic barriers slowing energy infrastructure and technology deployment, including permitting delays, fragmented data systems, workforce shortages, financing gaps, interconnection constraints, and global supply chain dependencies. Speakers agreed that accelerating deployment requires coordinated reform across policy, industry, finance, and workforce systems. The discussion directly aligns with the mission of Hispanics In Energy by underscoring the importance of workforce development pipelines, equitable access to innovation ecosystems, and ensuring Hispanic communities are active participants in both the deployment and economic benefits of the energy transition.

The moderated discussion among leaders in energy innovation, infrastructure development, finance, and policy focused on why deployment timelines for critical energy and digital infrastructure remain misaligned with urgent demand growth. Panelists emphasized that the constraints are not isolated but interconnected across permitting, capital formation, labor supply, data systems, and grid integration.

The panel reinforced that energy deployment challenges are systemic rather than isolated, spanning finance, permitting, workforce capacity, data infrastructure, and global supply chains. Addressing these constraints requires coordinated reform across sectors. For Hispanics In Energy, the discussion highlights the urgency of ensuring Latino participation in workforce pipelines, innovation ecosystems, and infrastructure decision-making so that the benefits of the energy transition are broadly shared and equitably distributed.

Key Themes and Discussion Highlights:

1. Misaligned innovation funding and deployment pathways.

Panelists highlighted a structural gap between venture capital models and energy infrastructure realities. Early-stage technologies often stall between demonstration and utility-scale adoption due to lack of intermediate financing.

An energy finance leader noted, “There’s an understanding and short-sightedness by innovators as to how long it takes to get adoption—not just funding and a unicorn exit.” Another speaker added, “We need alternative pathways beyond the unicorn model to actually deploy technology at scale,” emphasizing the need for patient capital aligned with infrastructure timelines.

2. Fragmented data systems and planning inefficiencies.

Speakers identified data silos across agencies, utilities, and developers as a major bottleneck, leading to delayed planning and reactive community engagement.

An infrastructure systems leader stated, “Data silos are leading to fragmented decision-making—you should know about a project before it shows up as a protest in your backyard.” Another panelist emphasized that “a unified platform would make permitting and planning significantly faster and more transparent,” underscoring the need for integrated digital infrastructure.

3. Permitting complexity and delayed execution.

Permitting timelines of multiple years were cited as a primary constraint on infrastructure deployment, compounded by interagency coordination challenges and litigation risk.

An infrastructure development leader noted, “A project that should take one to two years often takes five to ten—that delay directly translates into billions in added cost.” A policy speaker added, “In emergency cases, NEPA went from years to two months—so we know acceleration is possible,” highlighting that streamlined processes are achievable under existing frameworks.

4. Workforce shortages and supply chain constraints.

A major constraint identified was the shortage of skilled labor across trades, engineering, and technical roles, alongside reliance on constrained global supply chains for critical components.

An infrastructure workforce speaker summarized the challenge succinctly: “The energy industry is ultimately constrained by people, parts, and processes.” Another panelist added, “We don’t have enough skilled trades to meet demand across all infrastructure projects,” reinforcing workforce urgency.

5. Grid interconnection bottlenecks.

Even when projects are ready to build, interconnection delays within regional transmission organizations significantly slow deployment.

An energy infrastructure speaker noted, “It doesn’t matter if you can build in two years if interconnection takes five.” A grid systems leader emphasized, “The grid is still the most important innovation we have—it should remain central to deployment strategies,” reinforcing the importance of coordinated planning.

6. Global collaboration and technology development.

Panelists stressed that advanced energy technologies require international cooperation, particularly in nuclear, fusion, and advanced materials.

A technology leader stated, “You cannot advance technical breakthroughs without partnership—the innovation ecosystem is global.” An energy finance speaker added, “Fusion, nuclear, and next-generation energy technologies require deep international collaboration and capital alignment.”

Keynote Speaker: Joseph Dominguez, President & CEO, Constellation
Chair, Hispanics In Energy ([Video Link](#))



Chair Dominguez emphasized that the United States is at a structural inflection point where artificial intelligence-driven electricity demand, aging infrastructure constraints, and rapid technological change are converging to reshape the energy system. The speaker underscored that meeting this moment will require unprecedented coordination among utilities, regulators, technology companies, and communities. The discussion strongly aligns with the mission of Hispanics In Energy by reinforcing the importance of workforce development, inclusive participation in infrastructure buildout, and ensuring Latino communities are active contributors to the innovation, investment, and leadership required for the next phase of U.S. energy growth.

Key Themes and Discussion Highlights:

1. AI-driven demand is reshaping the energy system.

Chair Dominguez described artificial intelligence and hyperscale data centers as a structural demand shock on the grid, creating unprecedented pressure on generation and transmission systems.

“The AI economy is driving all of these conversations.”

He noted that utility planning cycles are increasingly misaligned with the speed of digital infrastructure expansion and emphasized global competition in infrastructure buildout capacity, highlighting both U.S. strengths and emerging risks.

2. Grid utilization and peak demand are core constraints.

The keynote emphasized that the U.S. grid is significantly underutilized most of the year but strained during peak periods, creating inefficiencies and affordability challenges.

"The problem is the peak hours of demand are getting very hard to manage."

He compared the system to a toll bridge that is often empty but congested at critical times, arguing that improving utilization of existing infrastructure could materially reduce costs without requiring immediate large-scale expansion.

3. Permitting, regulation, and cultural mismatch are slowing deployment.

A major constraint identified was the gap between urgent infrastructure needs and slow regulatory and permitting timelines. The speaker stressed that environmental review processes, litigation risk, and interagency complexity are significantly delaying projects.

"We've got to figure out a way to manage peak energy demand."

He also highlighted a cultural divide between traditional utility planning and technology companies operating on rapid deployment timelines:

"There's a clash of cultures between long-term utility planning and companies where speed is everything."

4. Workforce and supply chain constraints are binding limits.

Mr. Dominguez identified workforce shortages in skilled trades, engineering, and technical roles as a critical limiting factor across all infrastructure sectors.

"People, parts, and processes are the three constraints."

He also stressed the importance of strengthening domestic manufacturing capacity for critical components such as transformers, breakers, and nuclear fuel supply chains.

5. Nuclear energy and firm power expansion require financing certainty.

Nuclear energy is essential for long-term reliability but emphasized that success depends on financing certainty, workforce scale-up, and long-term offtake agreements. Large, creditworthy energy buyers such as hyperscalers will play an increasingly important role in enabling project completion.

6. AI is transforming grid operations and planning.

Artificial intelligence is already being deployed across utility systems for optimization, including hydro dispatch, nuclear fuel management, and outage planning.

"We are operating multiple assets right now with computers controlling how we dispatch hydroelectric dams."

Mr. Dominguez emphasized that AI will increasingly augment or replace traditional planning functions performed by engineers.

7. Strategic opportunity: unlocking existing grid capacity.

A central argument of the keynote was that the U.S. can remain globally competitive in AI infrastructure by better utilizing existing grid capacity rather than relying solely on new buildout.

"If we're able to utilize the slack in our system, we will not be behind."

8. Role of Hispanics In Energy (HIE).

Chair Dominguez emphasized HIE's role as a neutral convening platform that brings together industry, policymakers, and communities across all technologies without bias toward winners or losers.

"We decided this organization wasn't going to pick winners and losers."

Chair Dominguez also underscored the long-standing and future role of Latino communities in building and sustaining U.S. energy infrastructure, particularly through workforce participation and leadership development.

Closing Reflection:

The keynote framed this moment as a defining transition for U.S. energy leadership. Meeting rapidly rising AI-driven demand while maintaining affordability and reliability will require coordinated action across policy, industry, and workforce systems. Mr. Dominguez emphasized that success will depend on urgency, collaboration, and the ability to unlock existing system capacity while building for future growth.

CEO Fireside Chat: Leadership, Reliability, and the Future of Energy HIE Board Members ([Video Link](#))



(CEO Fireside Chat speakers, from left: Deanna Rodriguez, Maria Pia Tamburri, Joseph Dominguez, The Honorable Nelson A. Díaz, and Dennis V. Arriola)

Moderator: [Maria Pia Tamburri](#), Vice President of Intergovernmental Affairs and Economic Development, Dominion Energy

Panelists:

- [Joseph Dominguez](#), President & CEO, Constellation
- [The Honorable Nelson A. Díaz](#), Board Member, Exelon & PECO (Retired), Former Vice Chair, PREPA, Co-founder, LCDA, Vice Chair & Co-founder, Hispanics In Energy
- [Deanna Rodriguez](#), President & CEO, Entergy New Orleans
- [Dennis V. Arriola](#), Operating Partner, Sandbrook Capital; Former CEO, Avangrid; Board Member of ConocoPhillips, Commercial Metals Company (CMC), Meritage Homes, Auto Club of Southern California, and United Utility

This CEO and leadership panel emphasized that the transformation of the U.S. energy sector—driven by artificial intelligence, electrification, and surging demand—will depend as much on people and leadership as on technology. The discussion closely aligned with the mission of Hispanics In Energy by underscoring the need to expand Latino representation across leadership, workforce, and decision-making roles to meet national energy needs and sustain economic growth.

Senior executives highlighted that the industry is entering a period of unprecedented demand growth, particularly from data centers and digital infrastructure, requiring faster planning cycles and more adaptive leadership. As Joseph Dominguez, President & CEO of Constellation, explained, “What used to be a five-year plan... is now a six-month strategy,” reflecting the pace at which utilities must evolve.

A central theme was representation and access. Leaders reflected on how limited Latino presence in executive roles historically constrained opportunity, and how organizations like Hispanics In Energy are changing that trajectory. As one executive noted, “There wasn’t a

convening of faces like this before,” emphasizing the importance of visibility and networks in leadership advancement.

Workforce readiness emerged as a critical risk. With an aging workforce and rising technical demands, panelists stressed the urgency of building talent pipelines early and at scale. Deanna Rodriguez, President & CEO of Entergy New Orleans, emphasized the role of sponsorship: “Until somebody highlights you, you don’t have a shot.” Speakers consistently reinforced that technical skill alone is insufficient without mentorship, exposure, and advocacy.

Artificial intelligence was described as a transformative force across operations and planning. Executives pointed to real-world applications already improving efficiency and reliability. As one leader noted, “We are operating assets today with computers optimizing how we dispatch generation,” while another highlighted predictive capabilities: “We can model where the next outage will occur before it happens.” These tools are compressing decision timelines and reshaping workforce skill requirements.

Leadership development was framed around adaptability, risk-taking, and breadth of experience. Joseph Dominguez advised, “Don’t chase the title, chase the experience,” while another executive reinforced, “No risks, no rewards.” Leaders stressed the importance of thinking beyond functional silos, with one noting that future executives must “think enterprise-wide, not just within their role.”

The role of Hispanics In Energy was positioned as both strategic and urgent. Speakers emphasized that Latinos represent a growing share of the U.S. workforce and will be essential to meeting future energy demand. As José L. Pérez, President & CEO of Hispanics In Energy, underscored throughout the event, expanding access, awareness, and leadership pathways is critical to ensuring that Latino communities are not only participants but drivers of the energy transition.

Policy recommendations for policymakers and industry leaders center on scaling workforce pipelines through early education, trade programs, and mentorship networks; accelerating leadership diversity and board representation; modernizing planning and regulatory frameworks to reflect rapid demand growth and AI integration; and fostering a culture of calculated risk-taking and cross-functional experience. Strengthening public-private partnerships for training and expanding access to energy careers—particularly in underrepresented communities—will be essential to sustaining reliability, affordability, and innovation.

Overall, the panel made clear that the energy transition is fundamentally a workforce and leadership challenge. Meeting rising demand and maintaining U.S. competitiveness will depend on how effectively the industry develops talent, embraces technological change, and ensures inclusive participation at every level of the energy system.

Spotlight Speaker: Pedro Azagra, CEO, Iberdrola Group ([Video Link](#))

This spotlight address by Pedro Azagra, CEO of Iberdrola, emphasized the convergence of global energy investment, infrastructure constraints, and workforce transformation, reinforcing the critical role of Hispanic leadership in meeting rising U.S. energy demand. The remarks aligned closely with the mission of Hispanics In Energy by highlighting the need to expand Latino participation across executive leadership, technical roles, and the broader energy workforce. Azagra framed the current moment as one requiring adaptability in a politically and economically complex environment, noting that energy companies must be able to “move left and right, up and down” as policy, markets, and demand evolve. He stressed that infrastructure—particularly transmission and grid modernization—remains a binding constraint and called for policy reforms to accelerate development: “To meet our future energy needs, we need improved permitting processes and litigation reform.”

A central theme was the tension between affordability, reliability, and investment. Azagra underscored that underinvestment and delays ultimately increase costs, stating that the system must be allowed to build at the pace demand requires. He also highlighted the rapid growth in electricity demand driven by digital infrastructure, noting that partnerships with large technology companies are already reshaping utility planning and capital allocation.

Workforce and demographic change featured prominently. Azagra emphasized that Hispanic communities represent a growing share of the labor force but remain underrepresented in leadership, warning, “If we don’t do it, they’re going to bring people from foreign countries to do it.” He encouraged greater focus on developing domestic talent pipelines and expanding access to energy careers. On innovation, Azagra pointed to artificial intelligence as a major

opportunity rather than a threat: “Do not avoid AI. This is not an issue—this is an opportunity.” He described how digital tools are improving system operations, forecasting, and efficiency, enabling companies to do more with greater precision.

He also offered a clear leadership message centered on ambition and execution: “Believe in dreams... just put on the table where you want to go,” and “Dream, and then move faster than you think you can.” At the same time, he urged stability in policy, cautioning, “Please keep energy off the fight,” emphasizing the importance of predictable regulatory environments for long-term investment.

Policy and industry implications from the spotlight include prioritizing permitting reform and regulatory certainty; accelerating grid modernization and transmission buildout; scaling workforce development with a focus on domestic talent; increasing Hispanic representation in leadership and technical roles; strengthening public-private partnerships to meet AI-driven demand growth; and investing in digital and AI-enabled grid technologies.

Overall, the spotlight reinforced that meeting the next phase of energy demand will require not only capital and technology, but also policy stability, faster infrastructure deployment, and a broader, more inclusive workforce capable of executing at scale.

Panel 4: Energy Reality: Looking at the Next Ten Years ([Video Link](#))



(Panel 4 speakers, from left: The Honorable Odogwu Obi Linton, Julianne Szyper, Lance Medlin, and The Honorable James E. Campos)

Moderator: The Honorable James E. Campos, President, Red Post Energy Futures

Panelists:

- Lance Medlin, CEO, Red Post Energy Group
- The Honorable Odogwu Obi Linton, Maryland Public Service Commission
- Julianne Szyper, Nuclear Policy Expert, Former Deputy Director of Energy, Commonwealth of Virginia

This panel brought a pragmatic focus to the gap between energy ambition and execution. Panelists Lance Medlin, CEO of Red Post Energy Group; David Vahos, President & CEO of PECO Energy Company; and The Honorable Odogwu Obi Linton of the Maryland Public Service Commission emphasized that rising demand from AI, data centers, and electrification is colliding with real-world constraints in transmission, permitting, and policy alignment. The discussion aligned with the mission of Hispanics In Energy by reinforcing the need for inclusive workforce development and community engagement in shaping infrastructure decisions.

Speakers consistently pointed to transmission as the primary bottleneck. As one panelist noted, “We are being constrained by our ability to transmit power,” highlighting that generation can be built faster than it can be delivered. Permitting was identified as the most immediate barrier, with fragmented processes delaying projects and increasing costs. Lance Medlin, CEO of Red Post Energy Group, emphasized the importance of early engagement: “If

the first time you're speaking to a property owner is when you're removing part of their land, you're probably not going to get support."

The panel reinforced the necessity of an all-of-the-above energy strategy grounded in reliability. Natural gas was described as essential in the near term—"the workhorse we have to ride into the next solution"—while nuclear was highlighted as a long-term anchor for firm, low-carbon capacity. At the same time, panelists warned that inconsistent and shifting policies are undermining investment. David Vahos, President & CEO of PECO Energy Company, underscored this risk: "No one is going to invest billions if policies can change in two or three years."

Demand growth is outpacing traditional planning cycles, requiring faster deployment and more flexible solutions. Panelists noted that modular and distributed resources will play an increasing role, but cannot replace the need for large-scale infrastructure. The discussion also touched on the growing politicization of energy decision-making, with one speaker cautioning, "Please don't let politicians make all the decisions regarding energy," emphasizing the need to keep reliability and affordability at the center.

Policy implications include prioritizing transmission expansion as critical infrastructure; streamlining permitting through clearer coordination and timelines; maintaining technology-neutral policies that support reliability; stabilizing regulatory frameworks to attract long-term investment; and strengthening community engagement to reduce opposition and delays. The panel also highlighted the importance of workforce development and supplier diversity to ensure that Hispanic and minority-owned businesses participate in the energy buildout.

Overall, the panel made clear that the next ten years will be defined not by a lack of resources, but by the ability to execute—building infrastructure faster, aligning policy with reality, and engaging communities effectively to support a reliable and affordable energy future.

Panel 5: Energy Supply Chains: Expanding Opportunities for Hispanic-Owned Businesses [\(Video Link\)](#)



(Panel 5 speakers, from left: Ramiro A. Cavazos, Raul E. Jurado, Illary Archilla, Diana Gomez, and Jose Niño)

Moderator: Jose Niño, Chair, Biofriendly / Board Member, Hispanics In Energy

Panelists:

- Ramiro A. Cavazos, President & CEO, United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Illary Archilla, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Terravanta Inc.
- Diana Gomez, Board Member, Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers
- Raul E. Jurado, President, Compendious IT Solutions

Moderated by Jose Niño, Chair of Biofriendly and Board Member of Hispanics In Energy, this panel focused on how expanding participation in energy supply chains is essential to both equity and system reliability. The panelists emphasized that Hispanic-owned businesses are underutilized despite being critical to meeting growing infrastructure demand.

José Niño framed the discussion around urgency and opportunity, noting that supply chain constraints—from transformers to cables—are slowing deployment and increasing costs. He emphasized that Hispanic firms must move into core infrastructure roles, stating, “Energy infrastructure depends on us—even if we are not yet fully in the room.”

A central theme was that access requires relationships, preparation, and persistence. Diana Gomez stressed the importance of trust and early engagement: “People do business with people they know,” highlighting that credibility and consistency are key to entering complex

supply chains. Panelists reinforced that partnerships—particularly with larger firms—are often the most effective pathway to scale.

Access to capital emerged as a primary structural barrier. Ramiro A. Cavazos underscored the disparity facing Hispanic businesses: “Capital is the pot of gold—and the biggest barrier,” noting that even high-performing firms face challenges securing financing. He emphasized that inclusion is about removing barriers, not lowering standards, and that Hispanic businesses are “the vendors of the future” in a rapidly growing segment of the economy.

Panelists also highlighted the importance of understanding procurement systems, particularly in federal contracting. Raul E. Jurado emphasized that success depends on aligning with how agencies buy, not just what they buy, and that firms must engage early and strategically within contracting ecosystems. As one speaker noted, “No doesn’t mean no forever—it means come back prepared.”

Workforce and mentorship were recurring themes, with speakers emphasizing the need to prepare the next generation of Hispanic engineers, entrepreneurs, and skilled workers for roles in electrification, infrastructure, and advanced energy systems. Collaboration across firms and sectors was consistently identified as a force multiplier for participation.

Policy implications include expanding supplier diversity through structured procurement pathways; increasing access to capital via targeted financing tools and loan guarantees; modernizing procurement systems to allow more flexible participation; strengthening joint ventures and partnerships between large and small firms; and investing in workforce and business development pipelines. Leaders also emphasized reducing administrative barriers and improving transparency in contracting platforms.

Overall, the panel made clear that integrating Hispanic-owned businesses into energy supply chains is not just an inclusion goal—it is a strategic necessity to meet rising demand, strengthen resilience, and ensure the U.S. energy system can build at the scale and speed required.

Spotlight Speaker: The Honorable Henry Cuellar, United States Representative, (TX-28) ([Video Link](#))

This spotlight address by Representative Henry Cuellar (TX-28) underscored the direct link between energy policy, economic competitiveness, and workforce development, with a strong emphasis on the role of Hispanic workers and businesses in powering U.S. growth. His remarks aligned closely with the mission of Hispanics In Energy by highlighting the need to expand access to energy careers, strengthen supply chain participation, and ensure Latino communities are central to infrastructure development.

Cuellar grounded his perspective in South Texas, emphasizing the strategic importance of trade and energy infrastructure. He described Laredo as “the largest port—bigger than LA, bigger than Houston,” illustrating how energy, logistics, and national security are deeply interconnected. He stressed that policy decisions must reflect real-world impacts, noting, “Energy is not theoretical—it is real.”

A central theme was the need for a pragmatic, bipartisan “all-of-the-above” strategy. Cuellar emphasized that maintaining affordability and reliability requires continued investment in oil and gas alongside renewables: “We need an all-of-the-above energy approach.” He pointed to Texas as a model of energy diversity and scale.

Permitting reform emerged as a key priority, with Cuellar warning that delays drive up costs and slow investment: “Delays cost money, and those costs get passed on to consumers.” He called for streamlined processes that preserve standards while enabling faster deployment of generation, transmission, and industrial infrastructure. Workforce development was also a focal point throughout. Cuellar stressed that labor constraints are as critical as policy barriers,

stating, “Projects don’t build themselves—people build those projects.” He highlighted the need to expand apprenticeships, technical education, and clearer pathways into energy careers, particularly for Hispanic workers who already play a significant role across construction, operations, and supply chains. He also emphasized the importance of aligning federal funding with workforce needs, noting gaps in energy-related training support and encouraging greater engagement in the appropriations process to direct resources where demand is growing.

Policy and industry implications from the spotlight include prioritizing bipartisan permitting reform; increasing investment in energy-focused workforce development and technical training; expanding Hispanic participation in energy supply chains and contracting; strengthening domestic supply chain resilience; and maintaining a balanced, all-of-the-above energy strategy to support reliability, affordability, and national security.

Overall, the spotlight reinforced that energy policy is inseparable from economic development and workforce readiness, and that meeting rising demand will require faster infrastructure deployment, practical policymaking, and a broader, more inclusive talent pipeline.

Panel 6: Building a Workforce That Delivers: Apprenticeships, Credentials, and the Jobs-to- Projects Pipeline ([Video Link](#))



(Panel 6 speakers, from left: Randall Stamper, Dave Tamayo, Jeyben Castro, Suzanna Valdez Wolfe, Missy Henriksen, and Deanna Rodriguez).

Moderator: [Deanna Rodriguez](#), CEO, Entergy New Orleans/ Director, Hispanics In Energy

Panelists:

- [Missy Henriksen](#), Executive Director, Center for Energy Workforce Development
- [Dave Tamayo](#), President of the Board of Directors, Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD)
- [Suzanna Valdez Wolfe](#), CEO, Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE)
- [Randall Stamper](#), Associate Vice Chancellor, Career Education and Workforce Programs, Virginia Community College System
- [Jeyben Castro](#), Community Outreach and Engagement Director, U.S. House of Representatives

This panel underscored a central message: the energy transition will be constrained less by technology than by workforce capacity. With accelerating demand from electrification, AI, and infrastructure expansion, speakers emphasized that building a scalable, inclusive talent pipeline—especially through apprenticeships, credentials, and community college pathways—is now a national imperative. The discussion strongly aligned with Hispanics In Energy’s mission to expand Latino participation across the energy workforce and ensure equitable access to high-quality career pathways.

The panel reinforced a clear conclusion: the energy transition will succeed or fail based on workforce readiness. Infrastructure and technology alone are insufficient without scalable, inclusive pipelines that connect training to real projects. For Hispanics In Energy, the discussion

reaffirmed the organization's core mandate—ensuring Latino communities are fully represented across every level of the energy workforce, from apprenticeships to leadership.

Key Themes and Discussion Highlights:

Workforce shortages are already binding constraints. Missy Henriksen, Executive Director of the Center for Energy Workforce Development, emphasized that the sector is experiencing sustained, structural labor shortages across core trades and technical roles. She noted: "We need all of the welders, the engineers, the electricians, the pipefitters," stressing that no single pipeline will be sufficient to meet demand. Randall Stamper, Associate Vice Chancellor at the Virginia Community College System, reinforced the scale of the gap, stating, "We could quadruple the number... and not meet demand," highlighting persistent shortages in electricians, welders, and technicians even with expanded training capacity.

Latino talent is central to national competitiveness-- Suzanna Valdez Wolfe, CEO of SHPE, emphasized that Latino engineers are not a niche pipeline but a core national asset, stating, "It's not Latino talent. It's the best talent in the country." She underscored SHPE's role in sustaining long-term STEM pipelines through chapters, mentorship, and early exposure, including family engagement as a critical success factor.

Policy and workforce are now directly linked-- Jeyben Castro, Community Outreach and Engagement Director at the U.S. House of Representatives, highlighted the growing connection between legislative action and workforce outcomes, noting, "Policies is now directly shaping how fast projects move," and emphasizing internships as a gateway to both civic and industry engagement.

Utilities as workforce ecosystem anchors-- Dave Tamayo, representing Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD), described utilities as regional workforce conveners connecting education, labor, and industry. He emphasized SMUD's clean energy transition goals and commitment to shared prosperity, stating, "We're going to use that as an opportunity to raise the tide for everybody."

He also framed utilities as long-term partners in workforce development rather than passive employers, helping align training pipelines with real infrastructure needs.

AI is reshaping workforce demand, not reducing it-- Across the discussion, speakers agreed that artificial intelligence will not eliminate workforce needs but reshape them. CEWD's Missy Henriksen noted that AI may increase demand for engineers and technicians capable of managing complex systems, predictive maintenance, and human-machine operations.

From apprenticeships to execution pipelines-- Moderator Deanna Rodriguez, CEO of Entergy New Orleans, framed the discussion around execution: turning training systems into "jobs-to-projects pipelines" that directly connect education, certification, and infrastructure deployment. The emphasis throughout was on speed, alignment, and scalability.



Joseph Dominguez



José Pérez, Rep. Julie Fedorchak (R-ND)



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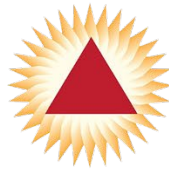
Pedro Azagra



Panel 2: Community Engagement and Investment in the Energy sector



Suzanna Valdez Wolfe



Rep. Henry Cuellar (TX-28)



*Panel 5: Energy Supply Chains:
Expanding Opportunities for Hispanic-Owned Businesses*



Missy Henriksen



Gabriel Chavez, Zack Valdez, Ph.D.



*Panel 6: Building a Workforce That Delivers:
Apprenticeships, Credentials, and the Jobs-to-Projects Pipeline*



Maria Pia Tamburri

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