

James L. Hunter
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Testimony of James L. Hunter
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Before the
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC
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“Joint Apprenticeship Programs, Earn while you learn”

Good morning Ms. Chairwoman and Members of the Committee:

My name is James Hunter and I am the Director of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Utility Department. I have been asked by our President, Ed Hill to speak to you today on behalf of the IBEW. Thank you for inviting us to comment this morning.

The IBEW represents 720,000 members more than 220,000 of them are utility workers. We represent Electrical as well as Gas members across the U.S. and Canada.

I personally have worked in the Energy sector for over 42 years.

Situation

The Energy sector is facing a large number of retirements over the next few years. According to the industry experts at the Center for Energy Workforce Development “CEWD” the average age for workers is 53 years old. Over the next 10 years 55% of the industry will need to be replaced.

My point in talking about the large number of people leaving the industry is to talk about how we replace and train those new employees. The joint apprenticeship model works. The IBEW in conjunction with several of our industry partners have formed the National Utility Industry Training Fund “NUIITF”. NUIITF is a non-profit 501-C3. Our model provides a standardized curriculum and certifications that are nationally recognized. We are using the construction model from the National Joint Apprentice Training Committee for Lineman and Sub-Station mechanic’s curriculum and have utilized a boot camp logic to filter possible new hires into the companies. Our programs are DOL certified and combine classroom training with sophisticated online simulations and workbooks. The new employee learns from the seasoned veteran while earning a living wage with benefits. The boot camps are between 6 and 12 weeks and provide the individual with the opportunity to see what the job really entails. The lineman boot camp exposes people to climbing poles as well as operating a bucket truck and learning the tools of the trade. They are given intense classroom courses and are evaluated by the companies as they go through the classes. We are working with other employers to come up with a gas program.

Many people are not cut out for college and want to start working right out of school or the military. Jobs in the electric and gas sectors provide a good secure job with decent wages and benefits. The push for community college is great but there needs to be some emphasis placed on

programs such as ours as an alternative. Our 6 week class runs about \$6000 per person. We have received grants in Michigan and Kansas to run some boot camps and we have partnered with the local WIB's to help with basic training needed for an applicant. DTE has hired over 48 people that have successfully completed the program. The latest boot camp had almost 50% veterans in it. In some cases the utility hired the person first and then paid them as they went through the boot camp. We believe there should be funding made available for people who are interested in the utility field and want to take a real life course such as the boot camps. NUITF has a database of people who have gone through the boot camps and we partner them up with utilities and construction companies that are hiring.

Suggested Solutions

IBEW President Ed Hill as said many times that kids need to be taught how to work. We understand that being taught by experienced craftsman is by far the best way to convey skills. Joint apprenticeships work and work well. The idea of working while learning a trade from a master craftsman dates back to ancient times. The NUITF boot camp model exposes people to the requirements of the job and what will be expected of them once they are hired. It provides the company with a person who is ready to go to work day one with basic knowledge of the job and the equipment. Many intercity kids don't have the funding to go to community colleges or even our boot camps. Financial aid is important.

Comments on Comprehensive Energy Legislation

The IBEW firmly believes comprehensive legislation is needed. Our markets are broken and our base load plants, both coal and nuclear are in jeopardy of closing. The reliability of the grid will depend on Congress fixing the markets. We must incorporate renewables and energy efficiency into the grid in an organized and fair manner. The utility must supply the needed generation 24/7 including variable sources. The reliability customers expect comes at a cost and we cannot rely on a patchwork of rules to provide the level of reliability we have come to expect. I have included a slide (Fig. 3.) from a recent EPRI report. The slide shows a net-zero home. The important thing to take away from the slide is the line at the top. That level of generation must be ready to insure a safe reliable system and the question becomes who will pay for it.

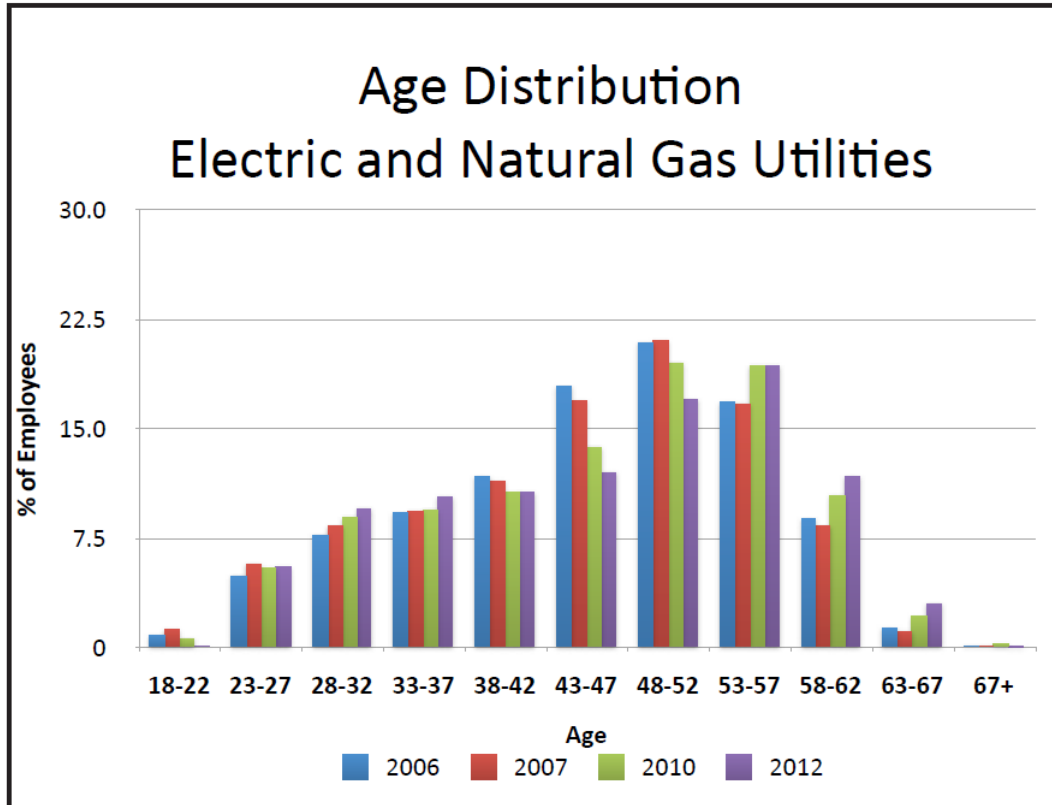
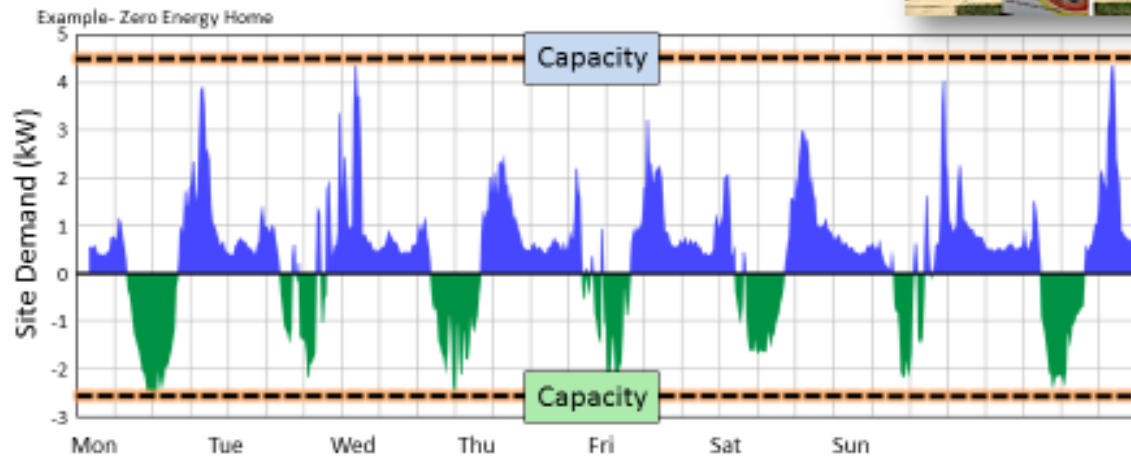


Fig. 1. Age Distribution in Electric and Natural Gas Utilities, *Gaps in the Energy Workforce Pipeline 2013 Survey Results*, (Center for Workforce Development)

Job Category	Potential Replacements 2013 - 2017		Potential Replacements 2018 - 2022	
	Potential Attrition & Retirement	Estimated Number of Replacements	Potential Retirement	Estimated Number of Replacements
Lineworkers	32%	24,100	14%	10,300
Technicians	41%	28,300	14%	10,100
Plant Operators	42%	14,900	13%	4,600
Engineers	34%	9,200	12%	2,900
Total	36%	76,500	14%	27,900
Totals exclude Nuclear				

Fig. 2. Potential Replacements, *Gaps in the Energy Workforce Pipeline 2013 Survey Results*, (Center for Workforce Development)

Characteristics of a Dynamic Power System – *Capacity v. Energy*



Capacity . . . Ability to Reliably Deliver Energy

January 2014

Fig. 3. Example of a Zero Energy Home, *Characteristics of a Dynamic Power System*, (ERPI)