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17TH DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

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COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE & TECHNOLOGY

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February 14, 2020

U.S. House of Representatives  
Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi  
United States Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

This past week, a few members of the Democratic caucus introduced a bill designed to “ban fracking,” a method of extracting oil and natural gas that is employed in my district and throughout my home state of Pennsylvania.

If this bill were enacted — and survived likely court challenges — it would eliminate thousands of jobs in my state and likely millions across the country. It would also remove from our energy grid the source of power that has been most responsible for reducing carbon emissions in our country.

We need to be leading the fight to protect good jobs and combat climate change at the same time, and we have a great opportunity to do that by passing a bipartisan bill that has already passed out of the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology with bipartisan cosponsors, and has been endorsed by the Natural Resources Defense Council.

The Fossil Energy Research and Development Act of 2019 passed the full committee on July 24, 2019. It would authorize critical investments in the next generation of clean energy technology — including carbon capture, storage and utilization, methane leak detection and mitigation, and advanced energy systems to reduce emissions and make fossil fuel power generation more efficient.

Unlike a “fracking ban,” the Fossil Energy Research bill would actually help us combat climate change. It is important that we show the American people that we believe in an energy policy that is based on science and prioritizes jobs — not one that is based on ideology and prioritizes headlines.

In western Pennsylvania, people feel betrayed when they hear that there are any Democrats who support the elimination of jobs in our communities — good, middle-class, union jobs — and whose policies could easily lead to an increase in carbon emissions. Where I come from, jobs come first, thanks in part to a long history of union organizing that formed the traditional backbone of our party. I know that you are aware of this history, and I want you to know that approximately 7,000 members of the Steamfitters, Plumbers, Operating Engineers, Boilermakers, Insulators, Electrical Workers, Laborers, and other trade unions are hard at work building one single ethane cracker plant in my district — a plant that relies on natural gas as a feedstock.

Currently, market analysts expect at least two other plants to be built in our region, at which these tradesmen and women could work for years to come. A “fracking ban” would foreclose these projects — to say nothing of the effect it would have on the thousands of additional workers who operate machinery and build the pipelines, compressor stations and related infrastructure. Of course, other businesses would also suffer — including the restaurant next to my district office in Beaver County, where sales have been booming since the plant construction began.

For all of these reasons, I ask you to discourage support for the “fracking ban” within our caucus, and to bring the Fossil Energy Research and Development Act to the floor immediately. I do not know why you have held it for more than six months, but in the past few weeks my constituents have been more adamant than ever that they want us to continue the pattern of bipartisan legislating that the House has followed throughout this Congress.

This bill presents a great opportunity to reaffirm our commitment not only to bipartisanship, but to a sensible energy policy that puts jobs first.

Sincerely,



Conor Lamb  
Member of Congress