

**Testimony of Olaf Olsen
Lead Representative
Keystone Mountain Lakes Regional Council of Carpenters**

**Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources
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Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you very much for allowing me the opportunity to speak today. My name is Olaf Olsen and I am a 33 year member and representative of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters. I'm here today on behalf of the brothers and sisters in the Carpenters Union to support H.R. 5291 "To establish an offshore wind career training grant program, and for other purposes". The next decade and beyond will be a critical time for growth of our skilled workforce and upgrading and diversifying Americas energy infrastructure. This legislation would help put thousands of young men and women through apprenticeship programs that will jumpstart their careers in skilled trades, jobs that will bring them solidly into the middle class.

In total the Carpenters Union represents nearly 600,000 members. Since our formation in 1881, the Carpenters Union has made training and education its top priority. Along with a vast network of training centers throughout the country, our union maintains a one million square foot facility in Nevada to serve all

disciplines. At this facility, and many of our regional centers, we have dive tanks, mock jobsites, and turbines for our members to train on. Every year we graduate thousands of apprentices through our training facilities. Additionally we provide upgrade training to members looking to further their education and personal marketability within the industry. Our members come from all walks of life, but one of our most important missions (I think) has been our continued partnership with “Helmets to Hardhats”, a program that provides opportunities for military veterans to transition into civilian life with a career in construction.

Within our eight represented trades you will find the men and women who will be responsible for these wind turbines at nearly every stage of the projects life.

Piledrivers and Divers will lay the foundation securing it to the sea floor with the help of underwater welders. The turbines machinery will be assembled by millwrights, who will continue to maintain those turbines for as long as they operate. When these trades work under contract they earn a fair wage for their work, including healthcare and pension. In our programs, all of this training opportunity comes for free to members in good standing.

H.R. 5291 would allow for organizations such as our own to apply for grants that help us expand our training capabilities and capacity. In the past, these sorts of

measures have helped our facilities purchase equipment and new technology to aid our apprentices and instructors in the education process. One example of this being virtual welding simulators, which drastically cut back on the time, resources, and personnel previously required to train the skill. This can also come in the form of purchasing dive pools or practice turbines. The bottom line is this; the construction industry is currently facing a shortage of skilled labor. If we hope to continue expanding our coastal infrastructure and renewable energy technology, we need the skilled labor able to fill the job. H.R. 5291 will not only provide that boost to the industry, but become a stepping stone for so many new tradespeople into thriving middle class careers.

Thank you again for allowing me this opportunity to address the committee.