



**Eastern Atlantic States**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL OF CARPENTERS

1803 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, PA 19130 | Phone: 215-569-1634 | EASCARPENTERS.ORG

May 26, 2021

**Official Remarks**

**Senate Committee on Community, Economic, & Recreational Development**

**Drew Simpson, Regional Manager of the Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters**

(Pittsburgh) Senator Yudichak, Senator Cappelletti and distinguished members of the Committee on Community, Economic, & Recreational Development, good morning and thank you for allowing me to make remarks today. My name is Drew Simpson and I am a Regional Manager for the Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters. In Pennsylvania alone we represent roughly 20,000 of the best trained and most skilled construction workers in the United States.

We are happy to host this Committee today at our recently expanded carpenter-built Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters offices in Pittsburgh in hopes that it will be a truly bipartisan way for our leaders in the legislature to begin discussion on how can we promote construction and manufacturing investment for Pennsylvania workers. To truly ensure that jobs are created and protected there must be open conversation like this and we must all be industry partners. Unions, contractors, manufactures, republicans, democrats, and bureaucrats must be in this together.

When these industry partners are not working together cohesively, we see major problems that prevent future investment, or allows for investment that is only profiting the few. The Carpenters Union is proud to be a faithful and active industry partner supporting the industry leaders who commit to proper investment that helps build our communities, and create the family sustaining jobs the working class depends on. Unfortunately, we do not always see these partnerships hold up. We applaud the idea that government can and should do more, but government also has to understand that private entities must be held to higher standards.



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The Carpenters union and their members were one of the largest and most active supporters of the most recent and highly reported example of a construction/ manufacturing project leaving PA, The US Steel planned investment in the Mon Valley Works plant. Even after hundreds of carpenters wrote letters of support, attended public meetings, and publicly supported this project, our union was like everyone else in the region, caught off guard by an announcement of that the investment in local jobs was now being sent to Arkansas. Even with the support of both democratic and republican elected officials at both the legislative and local level, this project was moved out of PA. It leaves the question, if there was better communication by both the government and US Steel about the project, could we in the industry done more. Understanding that while we may have lost the jobs that went with the project, we need to focus on retaining the jobs that we continue to have at the facility. Our carpenters are part of the major fabric that is the manufacturing industry in Pennsylvania. Over 1,000 carpenters helped to build the Shell Pennsylvania Petrochemicals Project and complete construction, scaffolding, and millwright work across the state at other energy plants. Our members are trained to complete this work and the next generation of renewable energy that we are also witnessing more and more investment. Our members complete the work we are discussing today and will advocate for investment into good paying jobs.

In addition, we understand that we cannot just give free passes to development projects and proper vetting must take place to ensure that corporations and contractors are taking responsibility for their actions. Investment in the Commonwealth of PA must include that the workers on the job have protections from wage theft, worker misclassification, receive the prevailing wage on certain projects or area standard wages that provide good paying jobs to local workers, and that these workers are working under the safest conditions.

Thank you again for taking the time to hold this meeting today. We ask that you not let this be just one day of discussion between all partners. Through all parties here today working together, we can ensure that the workers of Pennsylvania have the opportunity to gain work in a safe environment and make the family sustaining wages that prove the investment in a project is worth it for our communities.

Representing members in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia,  
The District of Columbia and the Territory of Puerto Rico.