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## **Oil, gas policy integral to 2018 economic outlook**

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During the give and take of public discourse, few truly stop to think how absolutely essential oil and natural gas are to our lives, to our prosperity and security, and to our future. Oil and natural gas are the foundation of our energy-dependent economy. They profoundly affect how we live and work. They are key to our mobility, to keeping our homes and businesses warm, to providing us with electric power, and to supplying the raw materials for countless consumer and industrial products.

The energy policy choices our nation makes today are among the most important and far-reaching policy decisions we will make in the 21st century. If we are to continue our nation's positive energy trends, we must implement energy policies based on current reality and our potential as an energy leader. American energy policy should focus on what's important: American jobs, American energy security and American global energy leadership.

Building a better future takes energy, and oil and natural gas are central to continued progress. To do this, we need policies based on science and the free market to continue the positive effects of American energy abundance. We appreciate both the Trump Administration and members of Congress from both parties for recognizing the benefits of domestic energy abundance and its role in national security.

Policymakers at the federal and state levels can move forward and build upon our nation's new era of energy abundance, self-determination and global leadership. The Trump Administration, the 115th Congress and state policymakers have a unique opportunity to find solutions for many of today's most prominent issues such as creating middle class jobs, ensuring affordable and reliable energy for consumers and enhancing our national security. And for all of these goals, and more, the 21st century American energy renaissance offers a solution.

The good news is recent polls show the American voters clearly want policymakers to set aside outdated assumptions and partisan talking points and work together on safe, responsible and fact-based energy policy that grows our economy, creates well-paying jobs, and maintains our nation's global energy leadership.

Voters' clearly expect their elected leaders to place what's best for our state and nation's economy and energy future above partisan ideology and political posturing. I strongly believe the American people need and want moral, intellectual and strategic clarity — and courage from our policymakers.

A growing world demand for energy is why energy experts, economists and government agencies around the world, including the U.S. government's own Energy Information Administration, estimates fossil fuels will continue to provide most of the U.S. and world energy needs far into the future.

Worldwide energy consumption will increase 27 percent by 2040, and 77 percent of that energy consumption will be met by fossil fuels. The world will need more energy in the future, and oil and natural gas are poised to be the primary sources for that energy for decades to come.

Beyond consumption, we continue to make and pursue advancements in energy efficiency. A recent EIA study indicated the U.S. used 15 percent less energy and emitted 23 percent fewer energy-related CO2 emissions in 2015 than in 2005. Methane emissions too have declined even as oil and natural gas production has soared.

According to the EIA, U.S. air pollutants have fallen by 70 percent since 1970. Further, thanks in part to the increased use of domestic natural gas, ozone concentrations have dropped by 17 percent since 2000; all of which makes the U.S. not just an energy superpower, but also a global emissions reduction leader.

The fact is our nation's 21st century oil and gas renaissance has made domestically produced oil and natural gas economical and abundant. This market-driven success has helped our nation achieve significant emission reductions. The oil and gas industry has helped prove, conclusively, that oil and natural gas production and environmental stewardship are compatible. Clearly, a majority of Americans reject the stale mindset of last century's thinking peddled by some that oil and natural gas production and environmental stewardship are not compatible.

Going forward into 2018, we need smart pro-growth energy policies. If our nation is to achieve energy security and maintain competitiveness and not let our standard of living slip, we need a well-reasoned, fact-based energy policy that recognizes the central role that fossil fuels will play in meeting future energy demand.

Americans support developing domestic energy resources and believe that can be done in a way protective of our environment. Policymakers at all levels should pursue energy policies that drive economic growth, lower costs for consumers, protect the environment, increase American competitiveness and use our considerable energy resources as a way to lift people up. American energy policy is not a Republican issue or Democrat issue. It is an American prosperity and leadership issue.

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