

The Demand Decade

State of American Energy 2026

Remarks of Mike Sommers

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Good morning. Thank you for being here. We're here today to discuss the future of American energy. But before we do, I'd like to look back to 2007 — nearly two decades ago.

At the time, America produced just 5 million barrels of oil per day, and our economy and national security depended heavily on imports — including from Venezuela.

That same year, the Chavez regime seized the assets of American energy companies. It was part of a two-decade decline — fueled by state-sponsored theft and corruption that devastated not only their once-thriving energy sector, but also the livelihoods and freedom of the Venezuelan people.

Here in the U.S., we took a different path. Through competition and innovation, our industry ushered in the shale revolution and propelled America to its status as the world's energy superpower. The United States now produces more than 13 million barrels of oil per day — more than any country in the world. That production underpins America's energy security and economic strength.

America's energy leadership is not limited to our borders. U.S. oil and natural gas companies now play an outsized role in meeting global energy demand, reducing the influence of hostile regimes and providing the vital products that have lifted *billions* out of poverty and enable people all over the world to thrive. No industry has done more to improve human lives.

As the story of Venezuela continues to unfold, two things are clear:

Number one: The Venezuelan people deserve better than what they've had for the past two decades. They deserve the opportunity that comes with good governance, a stable economy, and access to reliable, affordable energy.

Number two: American oil and natural gas companies set the global standard for responsible energy development — combining technical excellence, operational experience, and innovation, even in the most challenging environments.

But turning reserves into sustained production—whether in Venezuela or anywhere else — requires more than expertise and geology. It requires stable governance, rule of law, operational security, physical safety, and long-term investment certainty.

This moment underscores a simple truth: Energy strength doesn't happen by chance. It is a choice. And that brings us to where we are today.

Here in the United States, we've arrived at our own energy inflection point. Multiple forces are converging to drive up energy needs dramatically. New technologies are scaling at extraordinary speed. Supply chains are being rebuilt.

The next ten years are shaping up to be the Demand Decade—an era that is going to require historic amounts of new energy. Whether our nation can meet that demand will define its trajectory.

So the question before us is simple: Is America's energy system prepared to deliver with the speed, scale and reliability that this moment demands?

The state of American energy is strong. There is no nation better positioned to lead in this new era.

At a moment when the world needs more energy than ever, the United States leads in both oil and natural gas production—and at record levels.

This year also marks 10 years since the first American LNG terminal in the Gulf Coast came online, and today, we are now the world's top LNG exporter.

Over the past decade, the United States has exported more than 8,000 LNG cargoes, contributing nearly half a trillion dollars to the American economy and supporting 275,000 American jobs.

This is the core strength of American energy: We have the resources to deliver affordable, reliable energy here at home and meet growing demand abroad.

But U.S. producers aren't just raising the bar for how much energy we produce. We're also leading the world in how it's produced.

American innovation and relentless efficiency have driven down the emissions per barrel of oil and natural gas while output and productivity have climbed.

No other country has matched America's ability to produce more energy with fewer emissions. It's the result of a system built on certainty, stability, and clear rules—where companies can invest, innovate, and deliver energy at scale with confidence.

This is what makes American energy the envy of the world. In uncertain times, the real test isn't based on short-term market signals—it's whether energy systems can perform under pressure and keep delivering when it matters most.

Production and resilience. Performance with endurance.

In 2025, this strength was reinforced by a decisive reset of the policy landscape.

EV mandates were lifted. LNG permitting restarted. Responsible oil and gas leasing onshore and offshore was restored—because meeting demand requires building, not blocking.

But the work isn't finished.

In 2026, our focus will be on three critical areas: infrastructure, access, and international competitiveness.

Infrastructure — This is the hinge point of the Demand Decade. And it must be the top energy policy priority of 2026.

Right now, America has energy in the ground — and demand on the grid — but too often the connection between the two is blocked by red tape, delay and endless lawsuits.

America knows how to produce energy. The real question is whether we're willing to build the infrastructure to move it — at the speed, scale, and reliability the Demand Decade requires.

The Mountain Valley Pipeline tells the story. This pipeline took longer to permit and build than the entire Apollo space program — and it took an act of Congress to finish this job. A system that requires an act of Congress to build a pipeline is a system that's broken.

That's why permitting reform isn't optional. It's essential.

It's the difference between meeting demand — or not. And API is all in until it becomes the law of the land — because when America builds, America wins.

Second is access — America is back open for energy investment. Now we must lock it in — by finalizing the five-year offshore leasing program and stopping state actions that would block responsible development.

Number three is international competitiveness — The United States is the world's energy superpower — but that status isn't guaranteed.

Federal policy has caught up to this reality — but real challenges remain, both abroad and here at home.

In Europe, regulatory proposals would allow European bureaucrats to reach beyond their borders, dictate rules for U.S. energy producers and disrupt global energy supply chains.

Here at home, punitive state proposals and extreme lawsuits would retroactively punish energy producers for meeting consumer demand — driving up costs and discouraging the investment needed to meet rising energy needs.

Infrastructure. Access. International Competitiveness. Across all three, the priority is the same: durable policy that outlasts political cycles and supports long-term investment, reliability, and growth.

As we head into this midterm election year, we are looking at a national shift. Americans are embracing energy realism.

Americans spent years being told they should do less, build less, produce less and pay more.

We're done with that.

The mainstream has moved decisively toward abundance, affordability, and growth. We want leaders who will meet rising demand, not run from it. Leaders who live in reality.

Now, a small fringe is stuck in the past. They oppose growth, expansion and new infrastructure. They're against new jobs, against higher living standards. They resist the energy required to power modern life.

They offer no vision for the future — only a defense of a status quo that no longer works.

And the rest of the country has moved on.

Voters across the political spectrum are saying it. Leaders on both sides of the aisle are responding to it. States are revisiting unrealistic targets. Energy realism — with a critical role for oil and gas — is winning the argument.

This is the clearest public consensus we've seen in a decade. The future belongs to those willing to meet demand, to deliver growth, and to lead with realism. Those who cling to scarcity and stagnation will be left behind.

This year we mark America's 250th birthday. Since the beginning, our great nation has accepted no limits on what it can achieve.

That spirit has defined our energy story.

In 1859, The Drake Well — America's first commercial oil well — struck oil in Northwest Pennsylvania. This breakthrough helped launch a new era of prosperity. It was a reminder then, as it is now, that American leadership has never been accidental, it is built by those who make a choice: To look at the world through clear eyes, and to innovate, to move forward.

That choice is before us once again today. And we've seen what happens — as it did in Venezuela — when leaders choose ideology instead of reality.

Will we embrace innovation, growth and prosperity? Or slide backward — denying facts, delaying progress, and ignoring the realities of rising demand?

That's the choice. And the American people have made up their mind.

We choose energy success, not surrender. We choose energy realism, not retreat. We choose record production of reliable, affordable oil and natural gas — energy that powers prosperity at home, strengthens allies abroad, and anchors energy security around the world.

American energy is the future — and America is ready to lead.

Thank you.