November 10, 2021

An Open Letter to AAPG, SPE, and SEG

Dear members of AAPG, SPE, and SEG,

I joined AAPG and SPE in 1982, and SEG in 2000. I have engaged with all three organizations in various technical and leadership capacities at all levels, and enjoyed the unique offerings of each.

I am part of three generations in oil and gas. My father was a member of SPE and AAPG from 1955 until he passed in 2020. My son and daughter-in-law are in the industry and association members as well.

Today, the oil and gas industry, at least in the United States and Western Europe, faces public, political, and financial pressure. Yet we in the energy industry have spent our lives dedicated to lifting the world from poverty. Most do not understand that. The industry has weathered storms before, and this one will pass as some in the public and leadership realize that the economy cannot run entirely on intermittent electrons and chemical batteries mined from the earth to back them up.

Until such a time, key decisions to preserve the health of AAPG, SPE, and SEG must be made. While we probably all feel a sense of historical loyalty, commitment, and even nostalgia, we must look to the future at the health of these important organizations and the people and companies who support them.

In that regard, just as happens in industry, I believe it is time for AAPG, SPE, and SEG to merge. Are there pros and cons? Absolutely. Will it be perfect? Of course not. But for efficiency, economies of scale, sponsorship, membership, vendor support, global reach, and other reasons it makes sense.

More importantly, it is needed for science and engineering. The extractive and disposal industries depend on interdisciplinarity to characterize the complex rock/fluid subsurface system, and manage it for the benefit and safety of all humans. I believe that a new, integrated association will facilitate this better than three separate societies.

When the time comes to make your voice heard, I encourage you to do so in support of this unique and important opportunity.

With energy!

Scott W. Tinker, Ph.D.
Director, Bureau of Economic Geology, State Geologist of Texas
Professor, Edwin Allday Endowed Chair, Jackson School of Geosciences, UT Austin
Founder and Chairman, Switch Energy Alliance
Chairman, Tinker Energy Associates