

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 2, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, and Leader McCarthy:

The COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing economic crisis are devastating the clean energy workforce and sector, undercutting our country's efforts to develop a strong and inclusive clean energy economy and severely hindering our nation's ability to combat climate change. As Congress develops forward-looking policies to rebuild the American jobs market and economy, we urge you to prioritize a robust clean energy recovery plan.

Nationally, approximately 594,300 clean energy workers have lost their jobs during the pandemic, while many others have been temporarily furloughed or underemployed.¹ This total represents an approximately 17.4% decrease in clean energy employment. To put this in perspective, in April, the national unemployment rate was 14.7%.² Further, these clean energy jobs losses also represent more than double the past 3 years of industry-wide clean energy employment growth.³ Recent analysis "conservatively project[s]" that the clean energy sector will have lost approximately 850,000 jobs – about a quarter of its workforce – by the end of Q2 2020 if no actions are taken to support the workforce and industry.⁴

Closures due to COVID-19 have also led to manufacturing reductions, supply chain issues, and decreased installation of renewable energy. For example, the Solar Energy Industries Association expects only 3GW of solar capacity will be installed in Q2 2020, a 37% decrease from pre-COVID-19 projections.⁵ The American Wind Energy Association has stated COVID-19 is putting an estimated 25GW of wind projects at risk.⁶ Meanwhile, respondents to an Energy Storage Association survey cited customer delays or cancellations, difficulty in obtaining equipment or other logistical challenges, and permitting and approval delays.⁷ In addition, energy efficiency work has ground to a near halt as manufacturing and installation of energy efficient building materials and appliances has declined.⁸

¹ BW Research Partnership, *Clean Energy Employment Initial Impacts from the COVID-19 Economic Crisis*, April 2020, E2, E4TheFuture, ACORE, May 2020 <https://e2.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Clean-Energy-Jobs-April-COVID-19-Memo-FINAL.pdf>

² Bureau of Labor Statistics, *The Employment Situation – April 2020*, May 2020 <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empst.pdf>

³ *Ibid.* 1

⁴ *Ibid.* 1

⁵ Solar Energy Industries Association, "COVID-19 Impacts on the U.S. Solar Industry," May 2020 <https://www.seia.org/research-resources/covid-19-impacts-us-solar-industry>

⁶ American Wind Energy Association, "American Wind Energy Association Releases COVID-19 Outlook," Mar 2020 <https://www.awea.org/resources/news/2020/american-wind-energy-association-releases-covid-19>

⁷ U.S. Energy Storage Association, "U.S. Energy Storage Association Survey Reveals COVID-19 Impacts on Storage Industry Revenue and Employment," Apr 2020 <https://energystorage.org/u-s-energy-storage-association-survey-reveals-covid-19-impacts-on-storage-industry-revenue-and-employment/>

⁸ *Ibid.* 1

As Congress works to help the American economy recover, we must ensure robust investments are made to spur growth in renewable energy, energy storage, energy efficiency, clean vehicles, clean and efficient infrastructure, clean fuels, and workforce development. These investments should both spur national growth and include funding opportunities for community-level adoption. Smart investments in these areas can help America decarbonize, put people back to work, and help our national, state, and local economies recover.

In addition, a number of the existing clean energy tax incentives for individuals and businesses are phasing down or expiring. Extending and providing additional flexibility for these credits, which spur production and save money for consumers, is another important facet of a quick recovery.

As we work to rebuild the clean energy workforce and sector, we must ensure we are creating high quality jobs that uphold fair labor standards and collective bargaining agreements. Federal investments must include provisions to work with organized labor.

The myriad devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are staggering, and further compounded by a potentially prolonged economic downturn. In the midst of urgent action to staunch these losses and rebuild, it can be difficult to also focus on our country's long-term needs. However, the impending climate crisis poses an existential threat to America and to the world and is expected to increasingly impact many of the same communities that have been most vulnerable during the pandemic. We must work to recreate an economy that is stronger, cleaner, and more inclusive. The clean energy workforce and sector are a key component of that effort, and must be included in recovery planning.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

/s/ _____
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Paul D. Tonko
United States Representative

/s/ _____
Brian Schatz
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Tim Kaine
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Tina Smith
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Mazie Hirono
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Jack Reed
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

/s/ _____
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

/s/
Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator

/s/
Lisa Blunt Rochester
United States Representative

/s/
Salud O. Carbajal
United States Representative

/s/
Matt Cartwright
United States Representative

/s/
Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
United States Representative

/s/
Gerald E. Connolly
United States Representative

/s/
Eliot L. Engel
United States Representative

/s/
Jared Huffman
United States Representative

/s/
James R. Langevin
United States Representative

/s/
Nanette Diaz Barragán
United States Representative

/s/
Suzanne Bonamici
United States Representative

/s/
Tony Cárdenas
United States Representative

/s/
Sean Casten
United States Representative

/s/
Yvette D. Clarke
United States Representative

/s/
Mark DeSaulnier
United States Representative

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Deb Haaland
United States Representative

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Ann McLane Kuster
United States Representative

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Ted W. Lieu
United States Representative

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Alan Lowenthal
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A. Donald McEachin
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Joe Neguse
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Scott H. Peters
United States Representative

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Katie Porter
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Jerry McNerney
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Eleanor Holmes Norton
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Chellie Pingree
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David Price
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John P. Sarbanes
United States Representative

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Darren Soto
United States Representative