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. 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%. Further, these clean energy jobs losses also represent more than double the past 3 years of industry-wide clean energy employment growth. 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.

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. The American Wind Energy Association has stated COVID-19 is putting an estimated 25GW of wind projects at risk. 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. In addition, energy efficiency work has ground to a near halt as manufacturing and installation of energy efficient building materials and appliances has declined.

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2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
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/  
Paul D. Tonko
United States Representative

/s/
Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

/s/  
Brian Schatz
United States Senator

/s/
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

/s/  
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator
Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator

Tim Kaine  
United States Senator

Tina Smith  
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator

Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator

Jack Reed  
United States Senator

Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator
/s/  Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator

/s/  Nanette Diaz Barragán  
United States Representative

/s/  Lisa Blunt Rochester  
United States Representative

/s/  Suzanne Bonamici  
United States Representative

/s/  Salud O. Carbajal  
United States Representative

/s/  Tony Cárdenas  
United States Representative

/s/  Matt Cartwright  
United States Representative

/s/  Sean Casten  
United States Representative

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

/s/  Yvette D. Clarke  
United States Representative

/s/  Gerald E. Connolly  
United States Representative

/s/  Mark DeSaulnier  
United States Representative

/s/  Eliot L. Engel  
United States Representative

/s/  Deb Haaland  
United States Representative

/s/  Jared Huffman  
United States Representative

/s/  Ann McLane Kuster  
United States Representative

/s/  James R. Langevin  
United States Representative

/s/  Ted W. Lieu  
United States Representative