

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 18, 2020

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President-Elect
Office of the President Elect
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear President-Elect Biden:

We write respectfully to request your administration make full repeal of the Trump administration's harmful tariffs on imported solar photovoltaic cells and panels an early priority. There are more effective ways to stimulate manufacturing in the U.S. than the current administration's unjustified tariffs that have cost the country thousands of solar jobs, billions in private investment and slowed progress in addressing the climate crisis.

President Trump imposed the tariffs on imported crystalline silicon cells and panels in 2018 under section 201 of the Trade Act. The tariffs were set to last four years at an initial rate of 30 percent, declining five percent per year to 15 percent in 2021. More recently, in October the president issued a new proclamation that increased the tariffs to 18 percent in 2021 from the previously announced level of 15 percent. The president's proclamation, which would impose an additional \$300 million burden on the domestic solar industry in 2021 alone, also authorized the U.S. Trade Representative to request a new investigation that could extend the tariffs beyond the four years originally levied. Unless repealed, the president's imposition of a higher tariff next year and the threat of an extension will only increase the harm already caused by these tariffs to residential and utility-scale solar installations and the solar industry as a whole.

We fully support and look forward to working with your Administration on meaningful initiatives to expand domestic manufacturing. The section 201 solar tariffs are not the way to achieve this objective. In just three years, President Trump's tariffs have dealt a significant setback to the solar power sector. Domestic prices of solar panels are now among the highest in the world, ranging from 43 to 57 percent above the global average. According to industry estimates, as many as 62,000 solar jobs have been lost or not created and more than 10.5 gigawatts of solar capacity delayed, representing a loss of sufficient generation to power 1.8 million homes and \$19 billion in investment. An additional consequence of the tariffs is that annual CO₂ emissions will increase by more than 26 million metric tons, equivalent to the emissions from 5.5 million cars or 7 coal plants.

We strongly support your administration's goal of achieving 100% clean electricity by 2035 as part of an agenda to address the climate crisis. Full repeal of your predecessor's tariffs will assure the solar industry can compete on equal footing with all other sources of electric power and further advance your climate and job-creation goals. We urge you to make repeal of the section 201 tariffs on solar cells and panels an early priority for the Biden-Harris administration.

Sincerely,

/s/ Martin Heinrich
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

/s/ Sheldon Whitehouse
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

/s/ Chris Van Hollen
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

/s/ Jacky Rosen
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

/s/ Catherine Cortez Masto
Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

/s/ Jack Reed
Jack Reed
United States Senator

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

/s/ Cory A. Booker
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

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

/s/ Thomas R. Carper
Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

/s/ Dianne Feinstein
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

/s/ Benjamin L. Cardin
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator