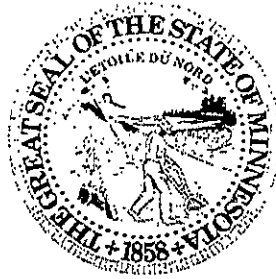


Minnesota Senate



Minnesota House of Representatives

July 27, 2017

TA-201-75

Chairman Rhonda K. Schmidlein
U.S. International Trade Commission
500 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20436

Dear Chairman Schmidlein:

We are writing to you as members of the Minnesota Legislature, a member of the Governor of Minnesota's Cabinet, and a regional representative of 50 cities, 48 townships, and 15 schools on a bi-partisan basis to encourage you to support solar manufacturing jobs in the State of Minnesota by not applying extraordinary trade measures on imports from Canada. Canadian investment is invigorating the manufacturing sector in the Iron Range—a struggling manufacturing region of rural Minnesota—but those operations depend directly on supplies from Canada that would be disrupted by the proposed trade action. We understand that the Commission is both authorized and obliged, pursuant to U.S. law and the North American Free Trade Agreement (“NAFTA”), to treat imports from Canada differently. We respectfully urge you to do so.

A perfect example of the benefits of solar trade with Canada that are being endangered by the proposed trade action is the recent investment made by Canadian producer Heliene, Inc. in the Iron Range City of Mt. Iron, Minnesota. The plant in Mt. Iron was originally established and operated by a company called Silicon Energy. While Silicon Energy initially provided badly-needed manufacturing employment in the region, the company eventually encountered quality-related problems that ultimately led to the company's dissolution.

Ontario-based Heliene, Inc. came to the rescue, starting contract work at the Mt. Iron manufacturing plant in 2015. In May of this year, Heliene assumed a lease to operate the entire Mt. Iron plant. Heliene saved these jobs, and the plant is currently generating roughly double the number of solar panels as Silicon Energy. The Minnesota Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development are working with Heliene on a plan to invest nearly \$10 million on new manufacturing equipment, plant expansion, and supplies to expand production even further in the fall of this year. This will provide immediately 25 new jobs, eventually seeking to employ approximately 70

Minnesotans in quality, high technology, manufacturing jobs producing over 100 Mw of Made in the USA solar modules for the US marketplace.

Demand for solar energy is rapidly growing in Minnesota, and we see a bright future for the Mt. Iron facility and others like it. However, these badly-needed manufacturing jobs are threatened by the proposed trade action. If prohibitive safeguard duties or quotas are imposed on solar products from Canada, operations like Heliene's Mt. Iron facility will no longer have access to vital components and will cease to be viable.

It is our understanding that the Commission is obliged under the terms of the NAFTA to provide special and differential treatment to imports from Canada. We urge you to exercise that authority to prevent application of duties on import that are not only non-injurious but are actually invigorating the U.S. industry and expanding manufacturing jobs.

Yours sincerely,



Senator Paul Gazelka
Majority Leader, Minnesota Senate



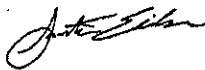
Senator Tom Bakk
Minority Leader, Minnesota Senate



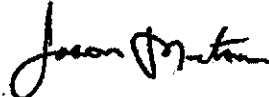
Senator David Tomassoni



Senator Carrie Ruud



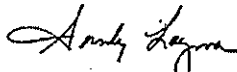
Senator Justin Eichorn



Representative Jason Metsa



Representative Dale Lueck



Representative Sandy Layman



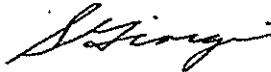
Representative Rob Ecklund



Representative Julie Sandstede



Commissioner Mark Phillips
Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation



Steve Giorgi, Executive Director
Range Assoc. of Municipalities and Schools