

March 26, 2021



Senator Marco Rubio  
284 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Jeff Merkley  
531 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Rubio and Senator Merkley:

Thank you for your March 23 letter. I appreciate the opportunity to share with you the steps the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) and our members have taken to prevent the use of forced labor in the solar supply chain. Forced labor is an abhorrent practice that runs counter to our industry's and our nation's values and beliefs.

SEIA, on behalf of the more than 250,000 American workers employed by the domestic solar industry, appreciates the leadership you have shown in promoting human rights and freedom around the globe. We share your conviction that no products made from forced labor should enter the United States and support congressional efforts to address forced labor in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR).

Earlier this year, multiple press outlets ran stories alleging the use of forced labor in XUAR to produce polysilicon. Polysilicon is a key input in the production of crystalline silicon solar panels.

Though there has been a significant increase in polysilicon production in XUAR in recent years, the U.S. solar supply chain is not dependent on products or inputs sourced from the region. As of 2020, 50% of the world's polysilicon comes from XUAR, but there is sufficient polysilicon production capacity outside of XUAR to meet U.S. demand, including polysilicon produced in the United States.

SEIA has supported efforts to remove trade barriers that impede exports of U.S. polysilicon. Ensuring U.S. polysilicon producers are able to export their products is critical, since nearly all ingot and wafer manufacturing facilities (the next step in the production of a solar panel) are currently located outside of the United States.

SEIA has been [calling on the industry to relocate supply chains](#) from XUAR since October 2020. On Dec. 8, International Human Rights Day, SEIA [announced the Forced Labor Prevention Pledge](#) and restated our recommendation to industry participants to move their supply chains. Since then, 239 companies representing the majority of solar panels sold in the U.S. market have signed the pledge. A copy of the Pledge is included with this letter. We also understand that, by June, most solar panel imports will be free of products sourced from XUAR.

In addition, SEIA is updating its [Solar Industry Commitment to Environmental & Social Responsibility](#) to ensure the industry is adequately and proactively addressing evolving environmental and social responsibility issues. SEIA also has partnered with leading experts in solar supply chain transparency to establish a comprehensive traceability protocol, to be released next month. The protocol, once fully implemented, will serve as an important compliance tool and give solar companies the ability to accurately determine the source of key components in a solar panel, including polysilicon.

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Leading solar panel suppliers are already taking steps to ensure the traceability of key inputs, including polysilicon. Among those steps is to ensure that suppliers are relocated in regions where companies can conduct independent third-party audits.

As this issue highlights, there are significant policy benefits associated with increasing domestic supply of solar products. Though some critical solar components are already made in the United States, bolstering our domestic manufacturing capacity throughout the entirety of the solar value chain would help promote transparency, reduce the need to rely on imported products and create good-paying jobs here at home.

For your reference, enclosed is a copy of SEIA's 2020 whitepaper, *The Solar+ Decade & American Renewable Energy Manufacturing: 100 GW by 2030*, which provides concrete policy options to spur domestic manufacturing in the clean energy sector. We have also included a March 18, 2021, letter in support of the Senate Finance Committee's March 16<sup>th</sup> hearing "Made in America: Effect of the U.S. Tax Code on Domestic Manufacturing."

SEIA is committed to preventing forced labor in the solar supply chain, and we would appreciate the opportunity to lend our expertise and work constructively with both Congress and the Administration to uphold U.S. law and prevent the importation of products made with forced labor.

We are eager to meet with you and members of your respective staffs to discuss our efforts to stamp out forced labor. That work will ensure a vibrant and safe global supply chain, which will be critical as we scale up a domestic manufacturing base. We also would like to discuss specific policies to support strong U.S. manufacturing and the massive demand for solar in the U.S. that will be needed to expand domestic supply chains, create jobs and fuel economic growth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Abigail Ross Hopper".

Abigail Ross Hopper  
President & CEO