



International Union of Operating Engineers

AFFILIATED WITH THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS

April 12, 2023

The Honorable Jason Smith
2418 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Neal
372 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Opposition to HJ Res 22

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Neal:

The International Union of Operating Engineers urges you to oppose the Congressional Review Act resolution on solar panels that will be heard in your committee next week. Enactment of this resolution could eliminate thousands of jobs for Operating Engineers and other skilled craftworkers across the country.

The International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) is one of North America's leading construction unions, representing over 400,000 hardworking men and women in the United States and Canada. Most members of the IUOE work in the construction sector, operating and maintaining heavy equipment; thousands of us are employed building the nation's roads, bridges, highways, and other transportation infrastructure. The IUOE also represents Stationary Engineers – skilled maintenance workers who operate and maintain industrial, energy, commercial, and public facilities across North America. Operating Engineers build and maintain energy assets across the nation including many solar and wind facilities.

As a signatory to the National Wind Turbine Agreement and the National Pipeline Agreement, the IUOE represents a skilled workforce at the forefront of addressing the nation's energy needs. Our members possess specialized training and experience building critical energy projects to assemble, erect, and maintain wind turbines and pipelines that power our country. Operating Engineers also build community, commercial, and industrial scale solar generation, and those jobs in this part of the renewable energy industry are put in jeopardy due to House Joint Resolution 22.

A recent Department of Commerce preliminary determination in the circumvention inquiry of solar cells and modules from the People's Republic of China found that four of the eight companies being investigated are attempting to bypass U.S. duties by performing minor processing in one of the Southeast Asian countries before shipping product to the United States. When the inquiry was first announced, the business uncertainty of possible retroactive tariffs ranging from 50 to 250 percent caused solar deployment to drop dramatically (by twenty percent) from 2021 levels. That meant twenty-percent fewer construction and manufacturing jobs in the solar sector.

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On June 6, 2022, the Biden administration issued Emergency Proclamation 10414 on Grid Reliability which provides that duties will not be collected on any solar module and cell imports from these four countries until June 2024, if the imports are consumed in the U.S. market within six months of the termination of the President's Proclamation. This provides U.S. solar importers with sufficient time to adjust supply chains and ensure that sourcing is not occurring from companies found to be violating U.S. law.

Repealing the President's Proclamation could result in retroactive duties and tariffs that would again disrupt deployment of four gigawatts of power generation and jeopardize 30,000 construction and 4,000 manufacturing jobs. Repeal of the moratorium would slow the deployment of renewable energy, generate unnecessary greenhouse gases, and lead to more extreme weather events as the climate warms.

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) was successful in creating a path to domestic manufacturing of the panels, battery storage, and other components used in solar plants, and U.S. manufacturing is rapidly expanding. The President's Proclamation helps create a smooth trajectory of jobs to continue the construction of advanced-stage projects as the number of manufacturing jobs under the IRA ramps up.

The International Union of Operating Engineers is part of the solar manufacturing renaissance. We are working with Invenergy on their project to develop a solar plant outside Columbus, Ohio. The company has purchased the land and a one million sq ft facility in suburban Columbus. In a joint venture with Chinese solar manufacturer Longi as its minority partner, Invenergy will invest \$600 million to address the massive shortfall in domestic solar manufacturing through a new company called Illuminate USA. Although the project is sited within an existing industrial building, over \$200 million in construction is required to upgrade the facility and that work is expected to begin right away.

This plant is expected to produce five gigawatts of solar panels annually and will leverage processes backed by Longi's market-leading \$1.5 billion investment in research and development. Five gigawatts represents nearly half of all utility-scale solar installations in the United States last year and is enough electricity to power one million homes.

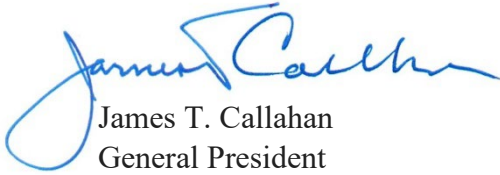
The plant will employ about 850 skilled workers, and it is the first solar manufacturing facility in the United States, to our knowledge, where the workforce would be unionized. We have worked in good faith with the company to establish a framework for the workforce at the facility that will allow workers to freely express their right to a union through a "neutrality" process. The company also made commitments to pay industry prevailing wages. We are partnering with Illuminate to pre-train workers at our state-of-the-art facility in Crosby, TX, the International Training and Education Center (ITEC), in OSHA safety and solar-assembly protocols.

We hope that this project represents the beginning of a long-term partnership to develop the domestic solar manufacturing industry, to address the supply-chain constraints in solar development, and to ensure that this industry creates high-quality, unionized American jobs.

The Congressional Review Act resolution could eliminate good-paying union jobs while we are successfully expanding the domestic energy industry, in places such as Columbus, Ohio. We are committed to building the domestic supply chain in solar energy, and passing this resolution will only inject uncertainty into the deployment of clean energy. The International Union of Operating Engineers respectfully urges you to oppose this resolution.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



James T. Callahan
General President