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Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee

65th Montana Legislature

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Senator Steve Daines
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

October 30, 2017

Senator Jon Tester
311 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Greg Gianforte
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Senators Daines and Tester and Representative Gianforte,

We write to express our concerns for President Trump's pending decision regarding placing tariffs on solar panels imported into the United States. Montana's solar industry is growing, and the imposition of severe tariffs on solar panels will most certainly put an end to that growth and lead to job losses. As Montana's federal representatives, we respectfully request that you contact the U.S. International Trade Commission, as well as President Trump, to emphasize the negative impact tariffs would have on Montana's solar industry and local jobs and ask that any remedy take an approach that does not harm this industry.

Competition and free market solutions create jobs and result in the lowest energy cost for our Montana residents. History has proven that protective tariffs have had long term implications on our overall US economy. Specific tariffs on solar panels may result in retaliatory tariffs on other US goods and services that will harm other US workers and manufacturers.

Montana's solar industry is having a record-breaking year. Installed solar capacity in the state has more than quadrupled since last year, from approximately 6.6 megawatts installed to more than 26 megawatts, creating jobs and local tax revenue along with it. More Montanans than ever have made the decision to invest in solar for their home or business, allowing them to take control of their energy bills and increase their self-reliance. However, the Solar Energy Industries Association estimates that 88 percent of Montana's solar jobs could be lost if the tariff remedies sought by foreign-owned manufacturing companies were enacted. In fact, uncertainty about the future of solar prices has already forced Montana-based solar companies to curtail expansion plans.

Again, we respectfully request that as Montana's congressional delegation you communicate to the U.S. International Trade Commission and President Trump that any remedy to this international trade case should be one that does not harm our solar industry.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary McNally", written over a light-colored rectangular background.

Sen. Mary McNally, Presiding officer

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