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Testimony of Abigail Ross Hopper
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Senate Budget Committee
Hearing on "The Default on America Act: Blackmail, Brinkmanship, and Billionaire Backroom Deals"

Chairman Whitehouse, Ranking Member Grassley, and members of the Senate Budget Committee, thank you for inviting me here today to discuss the growth trajectory of clean energy in America, the impacts we are already seeing from the historic Inflation Reduction Act and why the IRA must be preserved from efforts to repeal it as part of debt ceiling negotiations. I won't bury the lede: the IRA is already ushering in significant investments in the clean energy economy, and a domestic manufacturing renaissance is underway.

My name is Abigail Ross Hopper and I am the president and CEO of the Solar Energy Industries Association. I am privileged to represent the 255,000 Americans who work in the solar and storage industry. The policies enacted by the Inflation Reduction Act are having a huge impact across the country in the form of new American jobs, new domestic manufacturing capacity and improved U.S. energy security.

That is why it is essential that the IRA remain intact in its current form. The certainty that the law provides, the investments that are being made, the jobs being created, are all contingent on the continuation of this statute. Efforts to undermine the IRA put the domestic manufacturing renaissance in extreme peril.

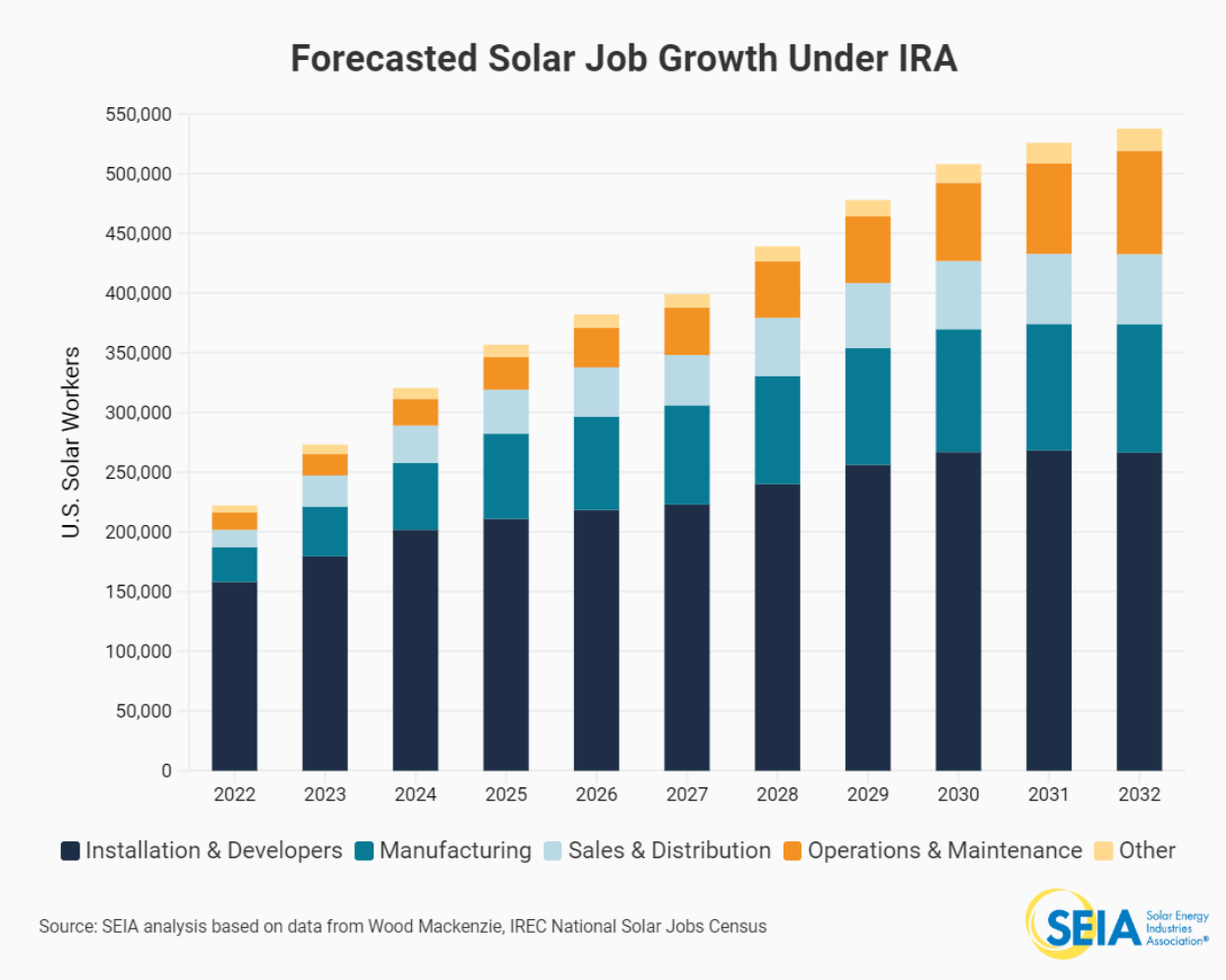
Jobs Jobs Jobs – Now and Into the Future

Nearly every week, I travel across the country visiting company headquarters, manufacturing facilities, and solar and storage installations. Among my biggest takeaways is that the solar and storage industry is an engine for American job creation. The IRA is a history-making law that has spurred tremendous industry growth and will continue to create well-paying jobs in all 50 states. Climate Power recently announced that within 8 months of the IRA being signed into law, clean energy companies have announced more than 142,000 new jobs across 41 states. Climate Power has also tracked 191 clean energy projects and $242 billion in investments.[1] Our team at SEIA has been tracking announcements of new manufacturing facilities for the solar supply chain. Since the IRA was passed, our domestic manufacturing capacity is expected to grow from 7 GW per year to nearly 50 GW per year.[2] This is proof

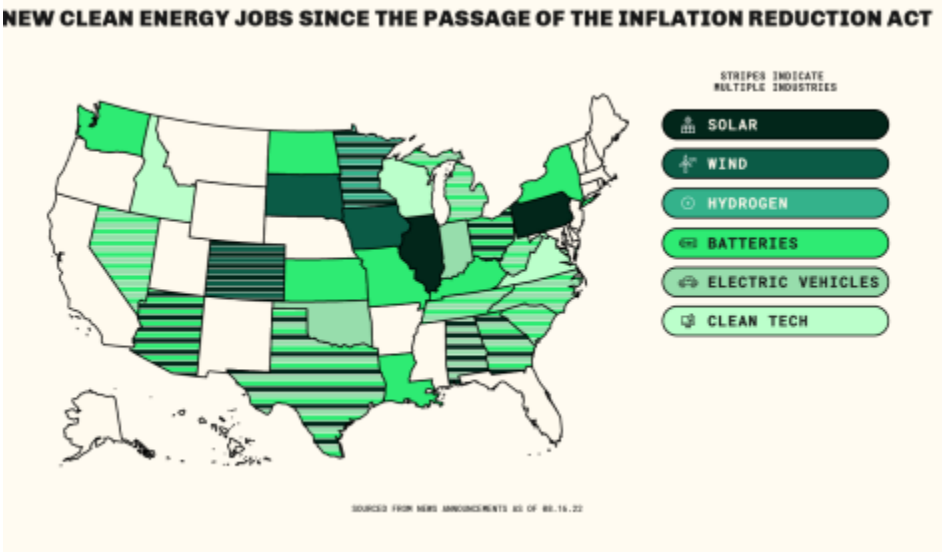
[1] *Clean energy boom - The 101,036 (and counting) New Clean Energy Jobs Across the United States*. Climate Power US. (2023, February). https://climatepower.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/23/2023/02/Clean-Energy-Boom-100K-Report.pdf

[2] *Solar & Storage Supply Chain Dashboard*. SEIA. (2023). Retrieved from https://www.seia.org/research-resources/solar-storage-supply-chain-dashboard

positive that we are in the midst of the next evolution of our economy – one that focuses on economic growth, well-paying jobs and rebuilding our country's manufacturing sector.

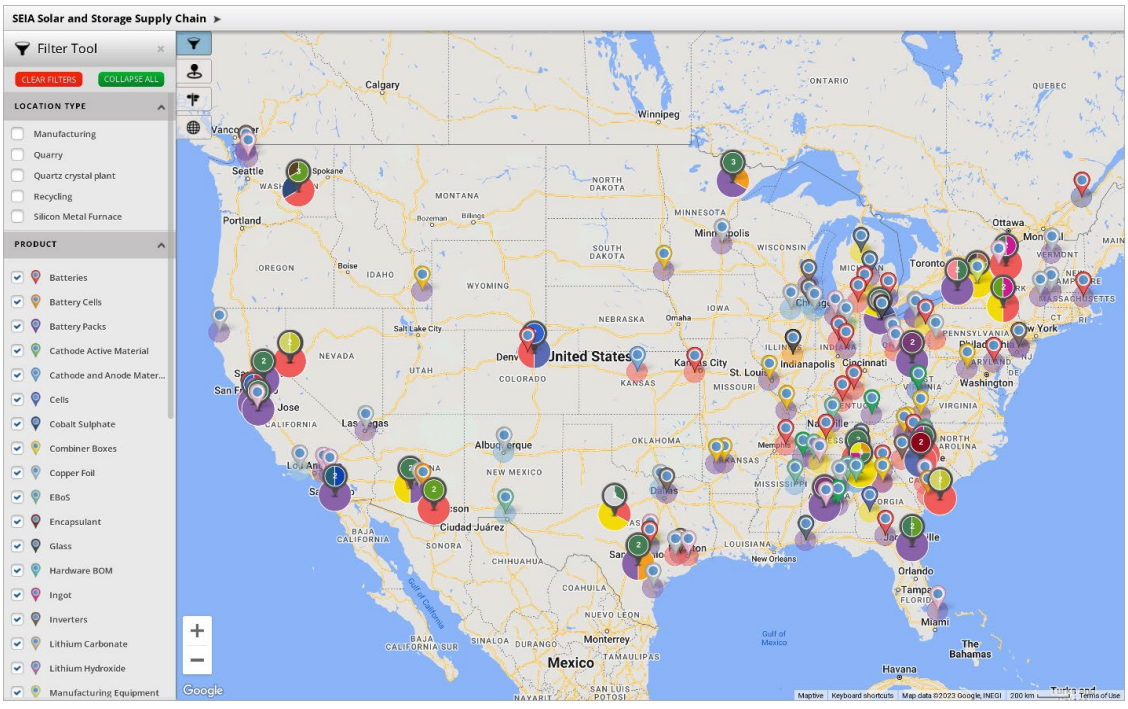


The passage of the IRA creates market certainty for all renewable energy sectors, storage, solar, wind, offshore wind and EVs just to name a few. And the great thing is that these investments will be made in red states and blue states alike. In addition, thanks to the incentives in the IRA, many of these projects are supporting new manufacturing jobs.



U.S. states with new clean energy jobs added since the IRA became law. (Source: Climate Power)
Image: Climate Power

Since passage of the IRA, SEIA has been tracking announcements of new domestic factories and domestic suppliers. Already, dozens of companies throughout the solar supply chain have made more than 40 domestic manufacturing announcements valued at more than $13 billion (see map below).[3] Developers are demanding access to domestic supplies of solar components.



[3] *Solar & Storage Supply Chain Dashboard*. SEIA. (2023). Retrieved from https://www.seia.org/research-resources/solar-storage-supply-chain-dashboard

To date, companies have announced over 50 gigawatts (GW) of module manufacturing capacity, and well over 100 gigawatt-hours of battery manufacturing. Between solar components, power electronics, and battery storage, the American solar and storage supply chain will open dozens of factories in the next three years.

For example, First Solar and Toledo Solar are building new solar module plants and expanding capacity in Perrysburg, Ohio. First Solar's $1.2 billion investment will expand production capacity and create hundreds of jobs. [4] For its part, Toledo Solar will expand its production capacity to over 2.8 GW and create an additional 250 new jobs by 2027.[5] Hemlock Semiconductor is upgrading its polysilicon plant in Saginaw County, Michigan – a $375 million investment that will create 170 new jobs.[6] Mission Solar is expanding module capacity in San Antonio, Texas, nearly doubling its workforce and tripling its production capacity.[7] And Hanwha QCells is investing $2.5 billion in cell and module manufacturing in Dalton, Georgia. Qcells also recently announced an investment of $160 million in a formerly shuttered REC Silicon plant Washington state.[8] Microinverter manufacturer Enphase[9] is moving forward with new

[4] Groom, N. (2022, August 30). *First Solar pledges big U.S. factory expansion thanks to climate law*. Reuters. Retrieved May 2, 2023, from https://www.reuters.com/business/sustainable-business/first-solar-pledges-big-us-factory-expansion-thanks-climate-law-2022-08-30/

[5] *Toledo solar plans to expand its manufacturing capacity*. Renewable Energy World. (2022, September 20). Retrieved from https://www.renewableenergyworld.com/solar/toledo-solar-plans-to-expand-its-manufacturing-capacity/#gref

[6] *Gov. Whitmer Launches Groundbreaking on New $375 Million Expansion of Hemlock Semiconductor, Creating 170 New Jobs*. State of Michigan. (2022, October 21). Retrieved from https://www.michigan.gov/whitmer/news/press-releases/2022/10/21/whitmer-launches-groundbreaking-on-new-375-million-expansion-of-hemlock

[7] Carnett, L. (2022, November 11). *San Antonio Solar panel manufacturer to double in size by 2024*. San Antonio Report. Retrieved from https://sanantonioreport.org/san-antonio-solar-panel-manufacturer-double-size-2024/

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[9] Kennedy, R. (2022, October 28). *Enphase to open new US manufacturing lines*. pv magazine International. Retrieved from https://www.pv-magazine.com/2022/10/28/enphase-to-open-new-us-manufacturing-lines/

U.S. manufacturing investments, and tracker manufacturers such as Nextracker[10], OMCO[11] and Alpha Steel[12] are preparing for even greater growth as their domestic production scales up in Pennsylvania, Arizona and Texas, respectively. At its Pennsylvania facility for example, Nextracker's expansion has helped renovate and reopen a formerly shuttered steel plant.[13] [14]

Collectively, these factories and dozens more like them represent tens of billions of dollars in new investments and one hundred thousand homegrown jobs across the country—and all the direct result of the Inflation Reduction Act. Any threat to the IRA is a threat to these factories and these jobs.

These investments also help to build workforce demand and rebuild opportunity in low-income communities, communities of color and traditional energy communities.

Take for example Michelle, a young woman training in the solar steel industry at the Nextracker facility I mentioned earlier outside Pittsburgh. As a child, Michelle's grandfather worked at the Bethlehem Steel plant which is now home to the Nextracker production line. She has spoken about her family's tradition of working in the steel industry and how meaningful it is for her to be making steel products used in state-of-the art solar trackers. Michelle talks about her pride as a single parent to work in the industry and provide a powerful example for her children.[15] In fact, while she trained as a machine operator, she was recently promoted to lead operator.

There are many more examples across the country of similar efforts to invest in clean energy and build a 21st century clean energy workforce. For example, in February a partnership was announced between

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[10] Sylvia, T. (2022, June 29). *Historic Pittsburgh Steel Plant reopens to make components for Nextracker*. pv magazine USA. Retrieved from https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2022/06/28/historic-pittsburgh-steel-plant-reopens-to-make-components-for-nextracker/

[11] Ludt, B. (2023, March 1). *OMCO solar surpasses 9.5 GW of domestic PV racking production*. Solar Power World. Retrieved from https://www.solarpowerworldonline.com/2022/08/omco-solar-surpasses-domestic-pv-racking-production/

[12] Ludt, B. (2023, February 10). *FTC solar expands solar tracker manufacturing with Texas Factory*. Solar Power World. Retrieved from https://www.solarpowerworldonline.com/2023/02/ftc-solar-expands-solar-tracker-manufacturing-with-texas-factory/

[13] Arend, M. (2022, September). *Pennsylvania: Sunny side up: Former steel plant to make solar energy equipment*. Site Selection. Retrieved from https://siteselection.com/issues/2022/sep/sunny-side-up.cfm

[14] Singla, P. (2022, June 27). *Nextracker and BCI Steel's new steel factory for US Solar Tracker Market*. Nextracker. Retrieved from https://www.nextracker.com/press-release/nextracker-and-bci-steel-renovate-abandoned-pittsburgh-steel-factory-to-serve-growing-u-s-utility-scale-solar-market/

[15] Nextracker LLC. (2023, May 2). *Dispatch from Pittsburgh: A solar steel worker's story*. YouTube. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRcRSXi5Ets

Coalfield Enterprises and Solar Holler, a developer in West Virginia, to train 100 new solar workers over the next 18 months.[16] The partnership includes universities, over 50 private sector employers, and unions with a focus on creating much-needed jobs in southern West Virginia.[17]

In nearby southwest Virginia, pre-existing infrastructure that long supported coal extraction is shifting to clean energy. Communities are thinking creatively to create partnerships with industry, career and technical education programs and community colleges. As Melanie Protti-Lawrence, a third generation manufacturer in Bluefield, Virginia told a reporter earlier this year about leading her family's company, Lawrence Brothers', expansion into clean energy supply production, "Central Appalachia has the manufacturing capacity, knowledge, experience and work ethic to serve the energy needs of the country and the world, it doesn't have to be coal."[18]

Manufacturing Leads to Jobs

The wave of new manufacturing announcements means greater job opportunities for American workers. Manufacturing has the largest jobs multiplier of any segment in the U.S. economy. Every factory job creates additional employment opportunities in other sectors, such as sales and purchasing, marketing, accounting, human resources, warehousing, logistics, and more. In addition, new factories help revitalize local economies, bringing restaurants and small businesses a new customer base.

SEIA estimates the solar and storage manufacturing workforce will grow to 115,000 Americans[19] and lead to more than a half a million manufacturing jobs across the entire industry by 2032.[20]

The manufacturing boom is transforming the U.S. solar manufacturing landscape. Domestic manufacturing incentives and long-term certainty in the market are spurring companies to act, along

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[16] *Solar Holler and ACT now collaborate on training program for solar workers*. Coalfield Development. (2023, March 15). Retrieved from https://coalfield-development.org/solar-holler-and-act-now-collaborate-on-training-program-for-solar-workers/

[17] Pace, F. (2023, February 19). *Solar holler, Act now announce training program for solar workers*. Charleston Gazette Mail. Retrieved from https://www.wvgazettemail.com/news/solar-holler-act-now-announce-training-program-for-solar-workers/article_18821239-aceb-5851-8dff-9a1e19af6ac9.html

[18] Lakhani, N. (2022, September 8). *'this is the future': Rural Virginia pivots from coal to green jobs*. The Guardian. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/sep/08/rural-virginia-pivots-from-coal-solar-green-jobs

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[20] *Turning America into a solar manufacturing powerhouse*. SEIA. (2023, March 30). Retrieved from https://www.seia.org/blog/turning-america-solar-manufacturing-powerhouse

with the need to diversify supply chains amidst the Covid pandemic, semiconductor shortage, and ongoing global conflicts. SEIA estimates that within 3-5 years, domestic manufacturing capacity will reach critical mass[21], although many factories and facilities will open before that.

In 2021, SEIA's goal to create 50 GW of domestic production capacity by 2030[22] seemed farfetched, but now, that goal is within reach. With the right policies and renewed certainty in the marketplace, the United States is on its way to becoming the most competitive and collaborative solar and storage industry in the world.

Economy-Building Clean Energy

The Inflation Reduction Act has created billions of dollars in investments across clean energy sector. For example, upwards of 40 new electric vehicle battery manufacturing sites will come to Michigan, Arizona, and South Carolina, with an additional 22 companies sharing their plans to expand manufacturing in places such as Oklahoma, Alabama, and Michigan. Wind manufacturing facilities have been announced similarly across states that include South Dakota, Iowa, Georgia, Arizona, South Carolina, Texas, and Tennessee[23]. Last year alone, according to the Business Network for Offshore Wind, the offshore wind industry tripled to $9.8 billion with additional projects expected to be announced through 2023 along the East Coast, including in the Chairman's home state of Rhode Island.[24]

American Clean Power recently announced that in the eight months since the IRA passed, over $150 billion in domestic utility-scale clean energy has been announced – the equivalent of 5 previous years of investment. For example, GE Vernova has said it plans on building a state of art facility to build nacelles for wind turbines. Siemens has announced it will build a manufacturing facility in New York that will create 420 jobs with approximately $500 million in investments for the region. Siemens also announced that it will reopen plants in southeast Iowa and Kansas. It's clear that the IRA is working, and we are just

[21] *U.S. solar and storage paper outlines plan to take control of U.S. Supply Chain*. SEIA. (2023, March 8). Retrieved from https://www.seia.org/news/us-solar-and-storage-paper-outlines-plan-take-control-us-supply-chain

[22] *Seia calls for ten-fold increase in American solar manufacturing capacity – 50GW by 2030*. SEIA. (2021, June 21). Retrieved from https://www.seia.org/news/seia-calls-ten-fold-increase-american-solar-manufacturing-capacity-50gw-2030

[23] Schoeck, M. (2023, February 9). *Ira Spurs 101k clean energy jobs in first six months*. pv magazine USA. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2023/02/09/ira-spurs-101k-clean-energy-jobs-in-first-six-months/"https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2023/02/09/ira-spurs-101k-clean-energy-jobs-in-first-six-months/

[24] Micek, K. (2023, February 21). *US offshore wind investments more the tripled in 2022, IRA to boost alternative uses*. S&P Global Commodity Insights. https://www.spglobal.com/commodityinsights/en/market-insights/latest-news/electric-power/022123-us-offshore-wind-investments-more-the-tripled-in-2022-ira-to-boost-alternative-uses

now scratching the surface for what our next decade will look like through more common-sense policies that help combat carbon emissions.[25]

In solar, as I have already shared, the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act has catalyzed a wave of new investments in both solar manufacturing and deployment.

Wood Mackenzie now projects that by 2032 the total base of installed solar will be five times larger than it is today and solar will offset 492 million metric tons of CO2 annually.[26]

The Blue Green Alliance found that more than 100 climate, energy, and environmental investments in the Inflation Reduction Act will create more than 9 million good jobs over the next decade. "The bill's broad investments will also help sustain the millions of existing jobs in the clean economy," BGA says.[27] These jobs will come from all sectors of the economy everything from industries like solar and storage to manufacturing to transportation to energy efficiency.

The consulting firm ICF says, "impact on the energy sector can be summarized succinctly: clean energy economics just got a whole lot better." ICF continues, "For mature technologies, such as wind and solar, these incentives have the potential to supercharge an already-rapid pace of development.[28]. This report also notes that additional deployment of clean energy will have a downward impact on energy prices for consumers.

Rystad Energy concluded that by 2030, the Inflation Reduction Act will boost installed solar capacity by 70.3 gigawatts and onshore wind capacity by 85.2 GW for a total additional capacity of 155.5 GW.[29]

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[25] *Clean Energy Investing in American*. American Clean Power. (2023, April). https://cleanpower.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/ACP_Clean-Energy-Investing-in-America_April-2023.pdf

[26] Liu, D. (2023, January 19). *Boom time: What the inflation reduction act means for US renewables manufacturers*. Wood Mackenzie. Retrieved from https://www.woodmac.com/horizons/boom-time-what-the-inflation-reduction-act-means-for-us-renewables-manufacturers/

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[29] Ortega, M., & Busby, E. (2022, August 30). *Inflation reduction act will attract an extra $270 billion in US wind and solar investments by 2030*. Rystad Energy. Retrieved from https://www.rystadenergy.com/news/inflation-reduction-act-will-attract-an-extra-270-billion-in-us-wind-and-solar-in

And finally, a study from scholars at Resources for the Future finds that the Inflation Reduction Act, "will create myriad net benefits for Americans through reductions in premature deaths, pollutant emissions, electricity prices, and more."[30]

These investments pay for themselves many times over. These investments pay for themselves many times over. A January 2022 report released from the Deloitte Economics Institute shows that the United States economy could gain $3 trillion if it rapidly decarbonize over the next 50 years.[31]

In addition, energy security in the U.S. will be much stronger with the IRA. Producing energy here at home with American-made solar and storage technology will insulate us from global conflicts and allow us to make sorely needed upgrades to our grid with confidence.

Stronger domestic solar production will continue to reduce America's dependence on foreign oil and help us compete on a global scale. This transition will improve U.S. energy security and help insulate working families from the volatile price shifts of global oil markets. And the IRA's substantial and almost immediate results have made the U.S.'s clean energy economy the envy of the world.

Environmental Justice

Job growth will also come in every American community. And, as outlined by the IRA, this growth will not bypass communities that have helped to build our nation – those that are traditional energy communities and those that have been adversely impacted by traditional energy production and distribution. It is imperative that we take this opportunity to create a more just and equitable future.

At SEIA, we believe one of the most beneficial components of the IRA was its focus on environmental justice. Our nation's traditional infrastructure has been built around underserved communities often facing health disparities from the proximity of factories, refineries, power plants, highways, and other sources of pollution. For the first time in history, in the IRA, environmental justice was at the forefront of environmental legislation. We must keep policies that focus on environmental justice and affect vulnerable communities front and center.

The IRA also includes other investments critical to closing gaps and improving our communities with investments like the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund and incentives to upgrade home electrical systems and energy efficiency upgrades. As a whole, the entirety of the Inflation Reduction Act offers Americans so much promise and, as I have outlined here, billions of dollars in economic opportunity. It is imperative that this progress not be stymied and stopped by a repeal of any portion of the IRA.

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[31] Renjen, P., & Ucuzoglu, J. (2022, January). *The Turning Point: A new economic climate in the United States*. Deloitte. https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/about-deloitte/us-the-turning-point-a-new-economic-climate-in-the-united-states-january-2022.pdf

SEIA and its members are committed to continuing to build a robust American solar supply chain and to adding tens of thousands of American jobs. We're building not just our economy, but America's next and greatest evolution. That's REAL energy dominance.

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