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EURASIA, AND EMERGING THREATS

The Honorable Ernest Moniz
Secretary
Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Moniz,

I write to express my support for the Administration's recently-announced Solar Ready Vets program, and urge the inclusion of the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS) as one of the participating military bases.

While still a nascent industry, solar power has recently experienced rapid expansion due to technological advancements and the enactment of pro-growth clean energy policies. In fact, solar power accounted for 36% of all new electricity generation in the United States in 2014, creating 31,000 American jobs.

Much of this exciting new growth can be attributed to President Obama's stewardship, under which the Department of Energy launched its Sunshot Initiative, which has helped bring down the cost of solar by funding research into such areas as cell technology improvements and the streamlining of regulatory processes.

The Solar Ready Vets program will build upon this innovation by training veterans for jobs in the solar industry at ten military bases across the country, utilizing the SunShot Initiative's Solar Instructor Training Network and leveraging the skills they accrued through their service.

As you may know, SolarCity, the largest residential solar installer in the United States, broke ground on a new, million-square-foot solar panel manufacturing facility late last year at the RiverBend site in South Buffalo. Upon completion, the project is expected to produce more than 1 gigawatt of annual solar capacity, while creating over 3,500 jobs in Western New York alone.

Twenty-five miles to the north of the forthcoming solar plant is NFARS. The military base is the largest employer in Niagara County, with an annual economic impact of nearly \$90 million. Home to the 914th Airlift Wing of the Air Force Reserve and the Air National Guard's 107th Airlift Wing, NFARS would be uniquely positioned to serve as one of the remaining six locations.

In addition to the base's proximity to Solar City, the Buffalo-Niagara region possesses several other resources that would support the Solar Ready Vets program. Nearby Erie Community College is a

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member of DOE's Solar Instructor Training Network, thereby enabling it to conduct training of exiting military personnel. Western New York is also home to 114,000 veterans, providing a large group of qualified individuals for the rapidly growing industry.

Buffalo-Niagara's ample job training capacity, expansive veteran population, and emergence as a solar panel manufacturing hub create a synergy that would make NFARS well suited for inclusion in the Solar Ready Vets program.

I respectfully request your consideration of NFARS for inclusion in this promising program. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Higgins". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Brian Higgins
Member of Congress