

BRIAN HIGGINS
28TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

2459 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3306
(202) 226-0347 (FAX)

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

RANKING MEMBER
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
COUNTERTERRORISM AND INTELLIGENCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,
RESPONSE, AND COMMUNICATIONS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3226

726 EXCHANGE STREET
SUITE 601
BUFFALO, NY 14210
(716) 852-3501
(716) 852-3929 (FAX)

640 PARK PLACE
NIAGARA FALLS, NY 14301
(716) 282-1274
(716) 282-2479 (FAX)
higgins.house.gov

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE,
EURASIA, AND EMERGING THREATS

September 17, 2014

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

Dear Secretary Moniz,

Encouraging the adoption of clean energy technologies such as wind, solar and biomass is critical towards securing our energy future. These technologies have the potential not only to promote long term energy independence, but also create manufacturing jobs and safeguard our environment.

More than 100 years ago, the Buffalo Niagara region first harnessed water power with the construction of a hydroelectric generating station on the Niagara River. Today, Buffalo is once again poised to play a leading role in the promotion of clean energy technology with the planned construction of one of the world's largest solar panel manufacturing facilities in Riverbend Commerce Park.

Despite these exciting developments, the United States lags far behind in solar manufacturing and installed capacity while nations like Germany and China pursue policies that lead to rapid growth and innovation in this sector.

To that end, the role of federal policies in encouraging the increased adoption of solar technology cannot be understated. For example, since the implementation of the solar Investment Tax Credit in 2006, annual solar installations have grown by over 1600% in the United States.

While tax credits will continue to play an important part in incentivizing the expansion of solar technology, we must also encourage the adoption of net metering policies by states and utilities, which allow residential and commercial customers to reduce their monthly electricity bills by selling excess energy they generate back to the grid. In addition to providing benefits to solar customers, distributed solar generation has the potential to provide savings to all ratepayers.

While acknowledging that this issue has traditionally been under the purview of state and local authorities, I believe the federal government has an important role to play. To that end, I urge your Department to engage with relevant federal agencies in order to formulate net metering best practices, in order to encourage the adoption of net metering policies and promote uniformity in their application.

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 with a large initial "B" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Brian Higgins
Member of Congress