

March 11, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Schumer and McConnell and Representatives Pelosi and McCarthy:

On behalf of the Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE), I am writing to express the Council's support for congressional action to improve the nation's energy infrastructure as part of any economic recovery legislation enacted to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We believe these measures are bipartisan and can transition our infrastructure to be more clean and resilient with a focus on public health and job creation.

The Council has outlined [policy recommendations](#) for the 117th Congress regarding approaches to address energy infrastructure and climate change. Building upon this foundation, **we offer specific recommendations below to address the nation's current economic and infrastructure challenges and to provide timely and targeted economic stimulus:**

- Make clean energy and demand-side energy efficiency central to infrastructure improvement, with a focus on resilience and improved public health and safety.
- Enact robust funding for innovative and existing clean energy programs managed by federal agencies, including programs that leverage private sector capital.
- Enact durable and long-term clean energy tax policy.
- Provide workforce development support with the goal of expanding jobs for all Americans.
- Provide support for advanced manufacturing to maintain U.S. leadership.

Congressional action in these areas will modernize U.S. infrastructure and help provide much-needed relief to stabilize investment and help communities recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.



About the BCSE

The BCSE is a coalition of companies and trade associations from the energy efficiency, energy storage, natural gas, renewable energy, sustainable transportation and emerging decarbonization technology sectors.

It includes independent electric power producers, investor-owned utilities, public utilities, equipment manufacturers, commercial end users and service providers in energy and environmental markets. Founded in 1992, the coalition's diverse business membership is united around the revitalization of the U.S. economy and the creation of a clean, secure and reliable energy future in America.

The BCSE is pleased to have an independent small- and medium-size businesses initiative under its banner, the Clean Energy Business Network (CEBN).

Together, the BCSE and CEBN represent a broad range of the clean energy economy, from Fortune 100 companies to small businesses working in all 50 states and over 350 Congressional districts. On a national basis, these industries support over 3 million U.S. jobs.

Clean Energy Delivers Critical Services During COVID-19 Pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, BCSE members have provided energy that has enabled essential workers and American households to operate under shelter-in-place policies.

BCSE members have also adjusted manufacturing practices and product lines during times of critical need. For example, fuel cell manufacturers switched production lines to ventilators; utilities and component manufacturers sequestered employees at sites to ensure reliable energy flows and essential products to be made; and propane companies provided space heating for pop-up COVID-19 testing and evaluation sites.

Prior to the pandemic, the clean energy sector was projected to grow and supported over 3 million jobs throughout the country. However, according to [BW Research](#), at the start of 2021, roughly 338,500 clean energy workers — approximately 10% of the sector's pre-COVID workforce — are still unemployed or furloughed.

To bring these workers back on the job and to support economic recovery, federal policy measures are needed to ensure the resilience and modernization of the energy system.

Please see the following recommendations as you pursue an infrastructure or economic stimulus package. *Please note that, as a diverse business coalition, not all BCSE members endorse or take a position on all the measures outlined below.*

- 1 Make clean energy and demand-side energy efficiency central to infrastructure improvement, with a focus on resilience and improved public health and safety.**



Infrastructure spending bills and initiatives aimed at economic recovery should include support for clean energy infrastructure.

This includes electric and natural gas transmission systems; smart grid infrastructure; microgrids; energy storage; on-shore and off-shore wind; solar; alternative-fueled vehicle charging networks; resilience projects such as on-site renewables, combined heat and power (CHP), and storage to ensure continuity of operations; and energy efficiency throughout the built environment.

There could be infrastructure investments for shovel-ready commercial, institutional, and public clean energy and resilience projects, including aggressive retrofits of schools, public buildings and mission-critical facilities. This could include pipelines, hospitals and urgent care centers, data centers, and other important infrastructure.

There could also be initiatives encouraging clean energy infrastructure at military and other federal installations.

Further, specific allowances could be provided within existing federal grant programs to state and local governments under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to utilize the entire portfolio of renewable energy, energy storage, energy efficiency and CHP to sustain operations of critical communications, data, water and sewage, transportation, pipelines and food processing infrastructures.

In addition, Congress should establish a grant program to support small businesses hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic by providing a quick injection of federal matching funds to kick-start energy efficiency and resilience retrofits through existing utility programs.

Further, this time of social distancing could be used to transform unoccupied spaces, including public buildings, which would support public health, energy efficiency, and job creation, while preparing for other emergencies through resilience measures.

2 Enact robust funding for clean energy programs managed by federal agencies, including programs that leverage private sector capital.

The growth and impact of clean energy technologies over the past decade demonstrate the value of investment made in federal clean energy programs.

The [*2021 Sustainable Energy in America Factbook*](#) recently released by the BCSE and BloombergNEF shows that despite major headwinds brought about due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the transformation of how the U.S. produces, delivers, and consumes hydrocarbons, electrons and heat marched onward.



Congress has the opportunity to build on market conditions and the recent enactment of the Energy Act of 2020, which authorized research and assistance across a broad portfolio of technologies and industries, including energy efficiency and CHP, hydropower, geothermal energy, wind, solar, energy storage, microgrids, carbon management and utilization, hydrogen, critical minerals, sustainable transportation and others.

The Energy Act of 2020 provides a menu of existing programs through which funding can be directed to quickly stimulate the economy. Research, development and deployment of clean energy technologies will position the U.S. to lead the world in sustainable energy innovation.

A focus on clean energy would also meet the need for grid reliability and safety, while boosting economic growth and reducing environmental damage.

For these reasons, the BCSE urges Congress to continue to fund:

- **DOE clean energy programs** for the offices of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE), Fossil Energy (FE), Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability (EDER), Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E) and other essential DOE clean energy programs.
- **Clean energy programs at the USDA**, such as the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), the Rural Energy Savings Program (RESP) and others.
- **The EPA Energy Star, Natural Gas Star, and Climate Change Partnership programs**, which assist households and businesses with energy efficiency improvements and to save money on energy bills, as well as reduce emissions and improve resilience.
- **The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program at HUD**, which has assisted residents with critical support to pay for home heating and cooling. This is especially important now, as millions of Americans have been affected by the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **State energy programs**, including funding for energy emergency planning and response; and funding for public facility resilience, energy and water system retrofits to update mission-critical facilities, especially for hospitals, schools, community shelters, non-profit nursing homes and first responder facilities. There are opportunities for partnership, with private capital leveraging public funds to support non-interruptible energy generation, microgrids and energy efficiency improvements.
- **The Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program under FEMA**, which should receive the full congressionally authorized 6% set-aside from the Disaster Relief Fund. This would support states, local communities, tribes, and territories as they undertake mitigation and resilience projects, reducing the risks they face from disasters and natural hazards.

These federal funds can be used to leverage business investment to accelerate deployment and emissions reductions in all sectors of the economy, and to assist Americans struggling with energy needs due to the pandemic.



3 Enact durable and long-term clean energy tax policy.

Clean energy has a significant role to play in building and securing our future prosperity and leading our nation's economic recovery.

These incentives, along with others that promote workforce development and domestic manufacturing, can help ensure American leadership in clean energy technologies, revitalize our manufacturing centers and create good jobs across the country.

Congress should enact broad-based, long-term and durable clean energy tax policy to incentivize deployment for a range of purposes, including carbon reduction, infrastructure investment, domestic and advanced manufacturing, and clean energy deployment.

These include deployment of energy efficiency; energy storage; renewable electricity; renewable natural gas; hydrogen; upgrades and environmental improvements at hydropower facilities; sustainable transportation; carbon capture, utilization and storage; and other infrastructure investments.

4 Provide workforce development support with the goal of expanding jobs for all Americans.

To rebuild the clean energy workforce and to train workers for jobs in these sectors, we recommend federal support and partnership with the private sector, state and educational institutions.

It is critical to build awareness that a career in clean energy extends beyond technical and engineering positions, and also includes construction, installation, finance and professional services — from customer relations to information technology.

Outreach and consistent engagement with currently under-represented communities is needed to build a workforce that is more reflective of the diversity of U.S. society.

This is a role for the federal government, through apprenticeship programs, partnerships with [minority-serving institutions](#) and historically Black colleges and universities, and creation of senior-level workforce development-focused positions, such as one recently created at the office of the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Energy.



5 Provide support for advanced manufacturing to maintain U.S. leadership.

Congress should focus tax incentives and direct investments in U.S. advanced manufacturing capabilities to stimulate clean energy technology innovation, improve energy productivity and enable the manufacturing of cutting-edge products in the United States.

This would include research, development, demonstration and deployment to support circular economy approaches to manufacturing such as battery and plastics recycling that produces new inputs from manufacturing processes, as well as critical materials manufacturing innovation. Bolstering domestic manufacturing would make the U.S. economy stronger and help sustain American leadership.

The Business Council for Sustainable Energy will continue to refine its economic recovery recommendations, and we look forward to working with you to pursue opportunities to advance our mutual objectives.

In the meantime, please feel free to reach out to me at ljacobson@bcse.org, or to Ruth McCormick at rmccormick@bcse.org, to further discuss these measures.

Sincerely,

Lisa Jacobson, President
Business Council for Sustainable Energy