

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 30, 2022

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm
Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Granholm:

As the Department of Energy (DOE) implements the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) provisions for Grid Infrastructure and Resiliency, we write to urge DOE to consider and allocate funding to support local power resilience enabled by microgrids. Microgrids are an increasingly important energy strategy for communities, businesses, and customers across the country to bolster power reliability, manage cost, and reduce emissions and as such should be a key part of our national infrastructure resilience strategy.

Section 40101 of IIJA, “Preventing Outages and Enhancing the Resilience of the Electric Grid,” directs DOE to establish a grant program to support activities that reduce the likelihood and consequence of impacts to the electric grid due to extreme weather, wildfires, and natural disasters, authorizing \$5 billion over the next five years. Microgrids’ innate ability to “island” during these events and provide local power off-grid makes them an ideal application for this program. In addition, Section 40103 of IIJA, “Electric Grid Reliability and Resilience Research, Development, and Demonstration,” directs DOE to establish a grant program where microgrids may also offer compelling solutions to the challenges posed by both natural and manmade, cyber and physical risks.

Microgrids allow critical energy users, such as water facilities, hospitals, fire and police stations, grocery stores, points of refuge, and even entire communities to isolate from the broader grid in the case of power disruptions, whether they are caused by extreme weather, local equipment failures, cyberattacks, or physical attacks. By placing electric generation technologies locally at the point of consumption, microgrids can provide true power resiliency against all hazards in a clean, safe, and cost-effective manner. Microgrids have a successful track record of protecting critical energy users through disasters like wildfires in California, the devastation of Superstorm Sandy in New York and New Jersey, and Winter Storm Uri in Texas.

In addition to their inherent benefits during a disaster, microgrids can provide valuable services back to the grid in the form of energy or other reliability services to further reduce power disruptions on “blue sky” days. The multiple value streams created by microgrids will maximize

federal funding dollars, extending local resilience for communities and resilient power for the grid itself.

Microgrids also reduce emissions relative to traditional backup power sources. Microgrids commonly utilize renewable resources like solar and wind and are combined with storage to ensure reliability. For baseload backup power, microgrids can also utilize lower-emission technologies such as fuel cells or linear generators.

We recognize the significant advancements the Department's Office of Electricity (OE) has made in researching and developing advanced microgrid technologies. We also recognize the challenge DOE may face balancing demands for federal funding as it evaluates project proposals. We believe that resilient microgrid deployments across the nation are a top priority and hope DOE will continue to treat them as such through the sufficient investment of these newly allocated resources. We encourage DOE to continue to strengthen current efforts within OE as well as develop new programs for educational outreach to state officials (including utility regulators, state energy offices and resiliency officers) so they can leverage the potential of microgrids within these new funding opportunities.

The IIJA presents a unique opportunity to support community resilience by funding projects to include the use of microgrids. We hope you will give microgrid-enabled resilience projects strong consideration in the implementation of these new grant programs.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

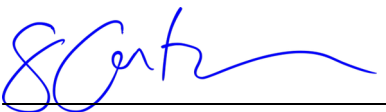
Sincerely,



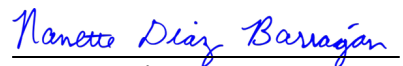
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