

**BEFORE THE
UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION**

In the Matter of :
 :
 :
CRYSTALLINE SILICON PHOTOVOLTAIC :
CELLS (WHETHER OR NOT PARTIALLY :
OR FULLY ASSEMBLED INTO OTHER :
PRODUCTS) :
 :

**STATEMENT OF
STATE SENATOR PAUL E. GAZELKA
MAJORITY LEADER, 9TH DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA**

Good morning Commissioners. Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak to you today concerning this important trade investigation. I am the Majority Leader of the Minnesota Senate and proudly represent not only the Central District of Minnesota, but the entire state of Minnesota.

As you may already be aware, we filed a letter with the Commission last week concerning the potential application of trade restrictions on solar products from Canada. That letter was signed by a broad bipartisan group that includes members of the Minnesota Legislature, a member of the Governor of Minnesota's Cabinet, and a regional representative of 50 cities, 48 townships, and 15 schools, all of them urging you to support solar manufacturing jobs in the State of Minnesota by not applying extraordinary measures on imports from Canada.

The solar industry is important to my state. Demand for solar energy is rapidly growing in Minnesota, and I see a bright future for the industry. According to statistics from the Solar Foundation, there were 2,872 solar jobs in Minnesota in 2016, with 1,123 these in solar installation and more than 300 in solar manufacturing. Minnesota ranks 16th in the nation for

installed solar capacity with enough solar power in 2016 to power nearly 47,000 homes. In 2016, there were 118 solar companies in my state and the solar foundation estimates that solar jobs grew 90 times faster than the overall state economy in 2016. We added an estimated 878 new solar jobs in 2016, a 44% increase over 2015, and solar jobs are projected to grow another 16 percent in 2017.

Given this background, and the importance of this industry to my state, I and my colleagues are concerned that this investigation does nothing to injure the vital and growing solar industry in Minnesota. I understand that the Commission is both authorized and obliged, pursuant to U.S. law and the NAFTA, to treat imports from Canada differently, and I respectfully urge you to do so.

Sharing a common border, the economies of Minnesota and Canada are closely intertwined and have enjoyed a long history of mutual cooperation and investment. This is perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in the case of the solar industry, where a Canadian company is in the process of invigorating the manufacturing sector of Minnesota's Iron Range – a struggling manufacturing region of rural Minnesota. I understand you will be hearing more testimony today related to the investments made by the Canadian producer, Heliene, in Mountain Iron, Minnesota. I want to simply note that this investment is a perfect example of the kind of cooperative cross-border trade that should not be disrupted or damaged by this proceeding. To its credit, the Canadian company, Heliene, has recognized the great promise of manufacturing in Minnesota and has staked its future with our state and its skilled workers. Not only has this Canadian investment saved jobs that were otherwise targeted for loss, but Heliene is now looking to expand badly needed employment in this sector in the near future.

I wonder whether this investment from Canada, and others like it, can be expected to continue if the Commission moves forward with restrictions on imports of vital components from Canada. I am concerned it won't.

But our interest in this proceeding extends well beyond Heliene and its welcome investment in Mountain Iron. I am also concerned more broadly to preserve the large and growing employment throughout the Minnesota solar sector even beyond the Iron Range. As I mentioned, there are over 2,800 solar jobs in Minnesota and solar installation jobs accounted for more than one in three. These installation jobs increased 224% last year as Minnesota continues to expand its residential, utility scale, and commercial solar installations. These investments represent badly needed employment – significantly in rural regions that have been hit hard by the economy. I want to encourage continued growth in this sector. Therefore, I want to also encourage the Commission to carefully consider what impact its actions in this case may have on the continued vitality of the U.S. solar sector – not only for manufacturing – but, for the many thousands of related installation, distribution, and development jobs.

Once again, I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. I'd be glad to answer any questions.