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# Solar Companies Unite to Prevent Forced Labor in the Solar Supply Chain

Thursday, Feb 04 2021

## [Press Release](#)

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today 175 solar companies, including some of the top solar manufacturers in the world, are announcing that they have [signed a pledge opposing forced labor](#) in the solar supply chain. By signing the pledge, companies are stating their commitment to help prevent these abhorrent practices and ensure that the products they are using do not have links to forced labor in the Xinjiang region of China, or anywhere else in the world.

This pledge is part of an [industry-wide effort](#) led by the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) that supports the development of a supply chain traceability protocol and a comprehensive update to SEIA's Solar Commitment, which defines common practices and expectations for the solar industry.

“We’re proud to stand with these companies to vehemently oppose the use of forced labor in the solar supply chain,” **said John Smirnow, vice president of market strategy for the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA).** “Forced labor will not be tolerated in our industry. Given reports of labor abuses in Xinjiang and the inability to conduct

independent audits there, solar companies should immediately move their supply chains out of the region. We've been calling on this for several months now and expect that most of the major suppliers should be out by June 2021, at the latest. We will continue to work with lawmakers, customs officials, the Biden administration, and our international partners to make sure solar imports are proven to be free of forced labor.”

The pledge [remains open for signatures](#), and all companies and organizations operating in the solar industry can join SEIA's effort. SEIA will continue to expand its coalition and build on this important work over the next several months.

### **Several companies spoke out about their participation in SEIA's effort:**

"The solar industry is positioned for rapid growth in the coming years, and it's vital to us at Swinerton Renewable Energy that we do it in a way that is consistent with our values as an employee-owned company," **said George Hershman, President of Swinerton Renewable Energy and SEIA Board Chair.** "We believe we have a responsibility to positively serve our communities through the work we do, and the exploitation of workers stands in direct violation of this belief. We condemn the use of forced labor in the Xinjiang region and anywhere else in the world.”

“Solar has the potential for enormous positive impact on the world, but that mission is void if products are made on the back of unethical labor practices,” **said Suzanne Leta, Head of Policy and Strategy at SunPower.** “SunPower is committed to making human rights a central issue throughout our supply chain and implore others to do the same. Signing the Forced Labor Prevention Pledge was a meaningful first

step; now we must be vigilant about continuing to lead our industry to do the right thing.”

“Integrity, respect and safety are foundational to our core values as a global infrastructure solutions provider,” **said Mario Azar, president of Black & Veatch’s Global Power Business.** “As a leader in the solar industry, Black & Veatch is committed to supply chains that are free of forced labor and remain committed to ensuring our supply chain adheres to these principles.”

“ENGIE rejects all forms of forced, compulsory or child labor and such abhorrent practices have no place in the supply chain,” **said Laura Beane, Chief Renewables Officer for ENGIE North America.** “We prequalify all suppliers, including performing detailed due diligence on key suppliers to validate they satisfy our code of conduct. Our commitment to human rights is not only publicly documented in our Ethics Charter, Supplier Relations Code of Conduct and Human Rights Referential, but now also as a proud signatory of SEIA's pledge.”

“We are at a critical inflection point in the development and implementation of new clean energy sources for our nation, an exciting time that reflects expanded access for all people and new opportunities to slow the effects of climate change,” **said Zaid Ashai, CEO of Nexamp.** “However, this progress cannot come at the expense of global human rights. For this reason, at Nexamp we are fully committed to doing everything we can to identify and evaluate the origins of the materials we use, with particular attention to avoiding materials that can be tied to the Xinjiang region of China, where issues of forced labor have been identified.”

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The Solar Energy Industries Association® (SEIA) is leading the transformation to a clean energy economy, creating the framework for solar to achieve 20% of U.S. electricity generation by 2030. SEIA works with its 1,000 member companies and other strategic partners to fight for policies that create jobs in every community and shape fair market rules that promote competition and the growth of reliable, low-cost solar power. Founded in 1974, SEIA is a national trade association building a comprehensive vision for the Solar+ Decade through research, education and advocacy. Visit SEIA online at [www.seia.org](http://www.seia.org) and follow @SEIA on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#).

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