



**Testimony of Samantha Sloan  
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**Before the  
House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis  
Hearing on  
*A Big Climate Deal: Lowering Costs, Creating Jobs, and Reducing Pollution with the  
Inflation Reduction Act***

**29 September 2022**

Good afternoon Chair Castor, Ranking Member Graves, and distinguished members of the Committee. My name is Samantha Sloan, and I am the Vice President of Global Policy at First Solar, America's leading solar technology company. I have been at First Solar for 13 years.

Founded in Ohio in 1999, we operate the largest solar manufacturing footprint in the Western Hemisphere, with two existing factories in Ohio, a third factory scheduled to come online in the state next year, and a fourth planned in the U.S. Southeast by 2025. First Solar is proud to be America's solar company: U.S.-headquartered and making solar panels in America, using American content.

I am honored to represent First Solar today and would like to thank the Committee for convening this hearing on the intersection between economic growth, industrial strategy, and fighting climate change. I would like to begin by adding context that, in our opinion, is crucial not just for this discussion today but also for understanding the current state of solar manufacturing in the United States.

Today, control of the global solar supply chain is concentrated in one country, China. By all accounts, China has bought this dominance through unfair and illegal subsidies and anti-competitive practices that have decimated American solar manufacturing. While solar panels were invented here, it is an unfortunate fact that today, First Solar is unique among the world's ten largest solar manufacturers: We are the only company of the ten headquartered in the United States, and the only company of those ten that does not engage in any manufacturing activity in China.

Viewed through this lens, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022 delivers a powerful legislative counterpunch, creating America's first durable solar industrial strategy and an opportunity to dismantle China's dominance of solar manufacturing value chains. Doing so creates a viable pathway to the secure supply of critical clean energy technologies, enabling the fight against climate change and capturing value for our economy.

It is difficult to overstate the economic value that the IRA will deliver. Solar is the lowest cost form of new electricity generation capacity, with system prices falling an average of 15% per year over the past decade. The energy transition is well on its way here at home. However, according to National Renewable Energy



Laboratory data, less than a third of the almost 24 gigawatts of new solar panels installed in 2021 were produced in the United States.

Quite simply, incenting the creation of domestic solar supply chains allows the United States to harness this opportunity. When a greater percentage of solar panels installed in America are competitively made in America, we ensure that the benefits of investment, economic growth, and job creation are retained here at home rather than exported to China.

Our own experience, which will span about \$4 billion in U.S. manufacturing investment since 1999 (excluding our overseas manufacturing investments), has shown that:

1. **American solar manufacturing is competitive.** Our newest factory in Ohio is expected to establish a highly efficient manufacturing template for our next generation technology, delivering higher efficiency and wattage solar panels, while lowering costs on a delivered basis.
2. **American solar manufacturing creates steady, good-paying jobs.** We expect to have more than 3,000 employees on our payroll by 2025, making us the largest employer in the sector. Our average manufacturing salary is \$65,000, and every one of our workers has access to comprehensive benefits, including healthcare. In addition to the direct jobs we create, it is estimated that we will support approximately 15,000 indirect jobs by 2025<sup>1</sup>.
3. **American solar manufacturing delivers economic benefits.** Our next generation solar panel, which will roll off our production lines in 2023, will use an estimated 90% American content, including glass and steel, which has already led to supply chain investments in the state. As we grow, our supply chain must grow with us, and it is estimated that our recently announced \$1.2 billion expansion plan will add \$3.2 billion to the US economy<sup>2</sup>.

Moreover, the IRA amplifies the benefits of solar manufacturing by providing the scaffolding for the entire industry to grow, and we expect to start seeing other investments in the United States across the clean energy value chain, including critical minerals, allowing the United States to capture further value.

I will conclude by bringing my testimony back to the primary purpose of this House Select Committee: the climate crisis. Crystalline silicon, the solar semiconductor primarily produced by China, is heavily dependent on coal power, and its producers are accused of using forced labor. The fact is that deploying PV systems using carbon-intensive solar panels from China [would result in significant carbon dioxide-equivalent emissions](#).

Just because the smokestacks are not visible from here in Washington, DC does not mean that they are not harming the planet. By encouraging manufacturing here at home, the IRA helps ensure that our transition to a sustainable energy future is fair to all and enhances, not damages, the global fight against climate change while allowing the United States to capture economic value in the process.

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<sup>1</sup> Assuming five workers added in the overall US economy for every one manufacturing job (Source: [National Association of Manufacturers \(NAM\)](#), using 2020 IMPLAN data)

<sup>2</sup> Assuming economic impact multiplier of \$2.68 per \$1.00 spent on manufacturing (Source: [NAM](#), using 2020 IMPLAN data)



First Solar is pleased to be here today to participate in these discussions. We are proud of our U.S. manufacturing capabilities and our past, current and future contributions to the U.S. economy, and we believe that the IRA will significantly advance efforts to grow our country's economy, create jobs in America and combat the climate crisis. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

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