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August 4, 2021

The Honorable Abigail Spanberger  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1431 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Spanberger:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Virginia Energy Consumer Trust, a nonprofit group representing the interests of Virginia families and businesses who seek energy justice. We are advocates for Virginia's beautiful natural resources and the equitable access to the reliable, affordable, secure, and sustainable energy needed to power modern life. At a time when Virginia families and businesses are attempting to get back on their feet, we need you and your colleagues in Congress to focus on steps to support economic recovery and growth. Infrastructure and energy policies are key areas of public importance, and they must be developed in a responsible, consistent fashion. We believe these issues are complementary and should be treated as such in order to promote equitable opportunities for security and prosperity.

Like broadband internet and a vibrant transportation network, reliable access to cleaner, more affordable energy is vital to economic stability and growth. Virginians – and all of Americans – can derive the greatest benefits from an all-of-the-above energy approach that balances affordability, reliability, security, and climate concerns. After two decades' experience in the energy industry, it is clear to me that reliable and low-carbon energy sources will be critical in the transition to a greener era. Companies that have powered our state and nation for generations must also play a leading role in this transformation. It is no secret that using intermittent renewable energy sources and powering appliances by electricity instead of natural gas increases costs for consumers.

Approximately one-third of Virginians use natural gas to heat their homes<sup>1</sup>. Many of these are low-income households. The Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy states that low-income households face "[disproportionally higher](#)" energy costs

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.eia.gov/state/analysis.php?sid=VA#41>

<https://vaenergyconsumer.com/>



and low-income communities face more “barriers to accessing energy technologies which help make energy more affordable.”<sup>2</sup>

A similar situation exists in business. Energy intensive industries that compete in the global economy against companies that get a free climate pass only leads to fewer U.S. businesses, fewer U.S. jobs, and more imports of dirtier products. We need leaders that are willing to level this playing field now. All of this speaks to the critical importance that diversity of energy sources plays in ensuring equitable economic opportunity for businesses and citizens.

Your time and service to Virginians and the nation are deeply appreciated. I look forward to continuing the conversation about the critical importance of ensuring all Virginians have reliable access to affordable and clean energy that allows them to thrive.

Respectfully,

C. David Hudgins  
Executive Director  
Virginia Energy Consumer Trust

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.energy.gov/eere/slsc/low-income-community-energy-solutions>  
<https://vaenergyconsumer.com/>