

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACKS IN SOLAR



FOUNDING MEMBERS

PEER Consulting Washington, D.C.
Positive Change Purchasing Cooperative LLC. Takoma Park, MD
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From: Ronald Bethea
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To: Deni Taveras
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Delegate Taveras, District 47B
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Reference: The National Association of Blacks in Solar and Positive Change Purchasing Cooperative LLC letter of support for The 2024 State of Maryland Justice 40 Legislative Bill.

Good Day,

Delegate Taveras, thank you for asking me as President of The National Association of Blacks in Solar and Positive Change Purchasing Cooperative LLC.. to provide a letter of support for the urgent need to get the 2024 Maryland State Assembly to pass President Biden's Justice 40 legislation which needs to be passed here in the state of Maryland during this 2024 Maryland State Legislative Assembly session.

The National Association of Blacks in Solar is a 501 C3 nonprofit organization that advocates and serves as an *economic blueprint for self-reliance for the solar and renewal energy companies both large and small, along with increasing market share for African and African American renewable companies.* The organization addresses the economic effect of high energy costs for HBCUs.

The organization also seeks to utilize Black American-owned farmlands and HBCU campuses to develop capacity and initiatives for renewable energy projects and to bring down the unemployment of underemployed young African and African men and women.

Also, the organization is designed to educate the African, and African American communities locally and nationally about the economic impacts of climate change and the need for environmental education in the African American community through black talk radio programs such as "Solar Now And The Future With Its Economic Impact On Black America." I have produced the podcast show since 2016 with thousands of listeners here in the United States and worldwide over the internet.

The National Association of Blacks in Solar and The Positive Change Purchasing Cooperative LLC put together a collaborative effort of African American Companies and applied for a 19 million dollar grant proposal, Entitled Solar Sustainability Across America (SSAA) is a collaborative effort of sectoral partnerships consisting of Tougaloo College, Global Apprenticeship Foundation, Power52 Foundation, and the National Association of Blacks in Solar (NABS).

Our Consortium works to enhance and promote educational training awareness to disadvantaged citizens of all ages and backgrounds. SSAA had support from industry employer partners, other non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations, government officials, educational institutions, and political figures. SSAA would have provided training and job placement for 750 new solar installers and professionals in Maryland, Washington, DC/Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Mississippi.

Our program training model provides 8 weeks of Pre-Apprenticeship training accredited by the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) which includes an 8-week solar training boot camp followed by a two-year Department of Labor solar installer Apprenticeship.

Our highly regarded training model prepares apprentices for the industry-recognized NABCEP Credentials and Certifications. Wraparound services and mentorship will be provided to mitigate barriers, as well as increase employment retention rates for our graduates. As a part of our wraparound service model apprentices will also receive industry-required tools and materials.

We were not successful in winning the award but we did learn that out of 500 million dollars of grant funding to grantees, we were only able to identify one African American institution, nonprofit, or CDFI. Which was solicited as a grantee: North Carolina A&T University, which received 23.7 million out of 500,000 million dollars from The Good Jobs Challenge through the US Department of Commerce.

Out of eight HBCUs that submitted 11 different applications for workforce development, only two were in the area of renewable energy. Our lead fiduciary is Tougaloo College and North Carolina A&T State University.

We have also learned that The State of Maryland Department of Employment Services was selected as one of the grantees and received 32,000,000 million for workforce development training from the Good Job Training Initiative through the US Department of Commerce.

Ms. Cherie Brooks the President and CEO of Power 52 was one of our collaboration team members from our group's proposal effort entitled Solar Sustainability Across America (SSAA) 19 million dollar grant.

Ms. Brooks then met with the Maryland state official about applying for funding because her home base of operation is located in Howard County. Ms. Brooks's nonprofit provides solar, electrical, and other skill sets of training for black and brown low-income and returning citizens. Power52's service areas are Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Howard County, and Prince George's County citizens.

With over ten years of service, doing an outstanding job changing the lives of our young people, she was informed by Maryland State officials that all the money was already allocated. The money was committed to other workforce development organizations. She never saw any request for proposal or heard of any that was put out by the state.

Ms. Brooks and I talked so I encouraged her after we met at the US Department of Energy back in February of 2023 to go directly to the US Department. She met and applied directly to the US Department of Energy. I'm very proud to inform you that her company has been awarded a \$1.5 million grant from the US Department of Energy over the next three years. Ms. Brooks has personally thanked me for working with her and encouraging her to keep applying for the money.

What I find very interesting is that Mr. Will Shirley, who has served as my Vice President of The National Association of Blacks in Solar and President of Sundial Solar of Jackson, Mississippi, also meeting with Mississippi at their Department of Energy for the State, was informed that all the funding was already committed to other entities and business in the state of Mississippi.

After I provided him with a fact sheet published by the White House Office on Intergovernmental Affairs with the State of Mississippi showed that over 100 million dollars was allocated from President Biden's Build Back Better and Inflation Reduction Act.

Another major example of the need to pass Justice 40 Legislation here in the state of Maryland under former Governor Larry Hogan's administration, according to an article that appeared in The Guardian News written by Baynard Woods on December 23, 2015, Entitled: Maryland accused of race discrimination over scrapping of Baltimore rail project. The article stated, "Governor Hogan faces a civil rights lawsuit after axing plans for light rail line serving African American areas and Switching funds to roads in the suburbs."

Also, looking at the fact that only 4 states out of the US 50 state capital legislative bodies have passed the Justice 40 bill cold Rising legislation on the state, which in turn makes funding sent to the----- must be used to serve those under-served communities which that state received the funding. The Governor of that state can not redirect that funding for other purposes

President Joe Biden's [Executive Order 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad](#). Section 223 of EO 14008 established the Justice40 Initiative, which directs 40% of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments – including investments in clean energy and energy efficiency; clean transit; affordable and sustainable housing; training and workforce development; the remediation and reduction of legacy pollution; and the development of clean water infrastructure – to flow to disadvantaged communities (DACs).

With this being said, [What is a Justice40 covered program?](#) A “covered program” is a Federal Government program that falls in the scope of the Justice40 initiative because it includes investments that can benefit disadvantaged communities across one or more of the following seven areas: climate change, clean energy and energy efficiency, clean transit, affordable and sustainable housing, training and workforce development, remediation and reduction of legacy pollution, and the development of critical clean water and wastewater infrastructure.

I want to thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to write this letter of support

Sincerely,
Ronald Bethea
President of the National Association of Blacks in Solar (NABS)
and The Positive Change Purchasing Cooperative LLC.