

**DOCKETED**

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*Comment Received From: API RISE  
Submitted On: 7/26/2024  
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**Jobs and Training for Returning Citizens Should Be Included in the Community Benefits Plan**

*Additional submitted attachment is included below.*

## **Comment Title: Jobs and Training for Returning Citizens Should Be Included in the Community Benefits Plan**

Re: High-Efficiency Electric Home Rebate Act (HEEHRA)

The Department of Energy HEEHRA guidelines (section 4.1.4, item 2, p.56) suggests that state programs could make commitments “To fill open positions for home electrification jobs utilizing home electrification rebates [to] those facing systemic barriers to quality employment, such as those with disabilities, women, returning citizens, opportunity youth, and veterans” to meet their Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility requirements.

We would like to emphasize the crucial role that including hiring returning citizens in the Community Benefits plan can play in making the HEEHRA Program truly inclusive and environmentally restorative.

Returning citizens often face significant barriers to reintegration into society, including challenges in securing stable employment. By prioritizing the hiring of returning citizens, companies participating in the program can contribute substantially to the creation of opportunities for marginalized individuals. This approach aligns with the program's goal of fostering social equity and inclusion.

Moreover, we propose that companies demonstrating a commitment to hiring returning citizens should be granted substantial favor in terms of contracts with the program.

Recognizing and rewarding such efforts would not only incentivize companies to prioritize this demographic but also contribute to the larger objective of community development.

In addition to the social impact, the hiring of returning citizens can also play a vital role in climate restoration through energy efficiency initiatives. By providing meaningful employment opportunities to returning citizens, the program can contribute to a more sustainable and resilient community. This dual-purpose approach ensures that environmental restoration goes hand in hand with social progress.

We urge program organizers to consider these suggestions seriously and to take proactive steps in encouraging and incentivizing the hiring of returning citizens by participating companies. We believe that such a strategy will not only enrich the

workforce but also amplify the positive impact of the program on both marginalized communities and our environment.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to seeing the program become a model for comprehensive community development and climate restoration.

Sincerely,

Billy Taing on behalf of API RISE

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