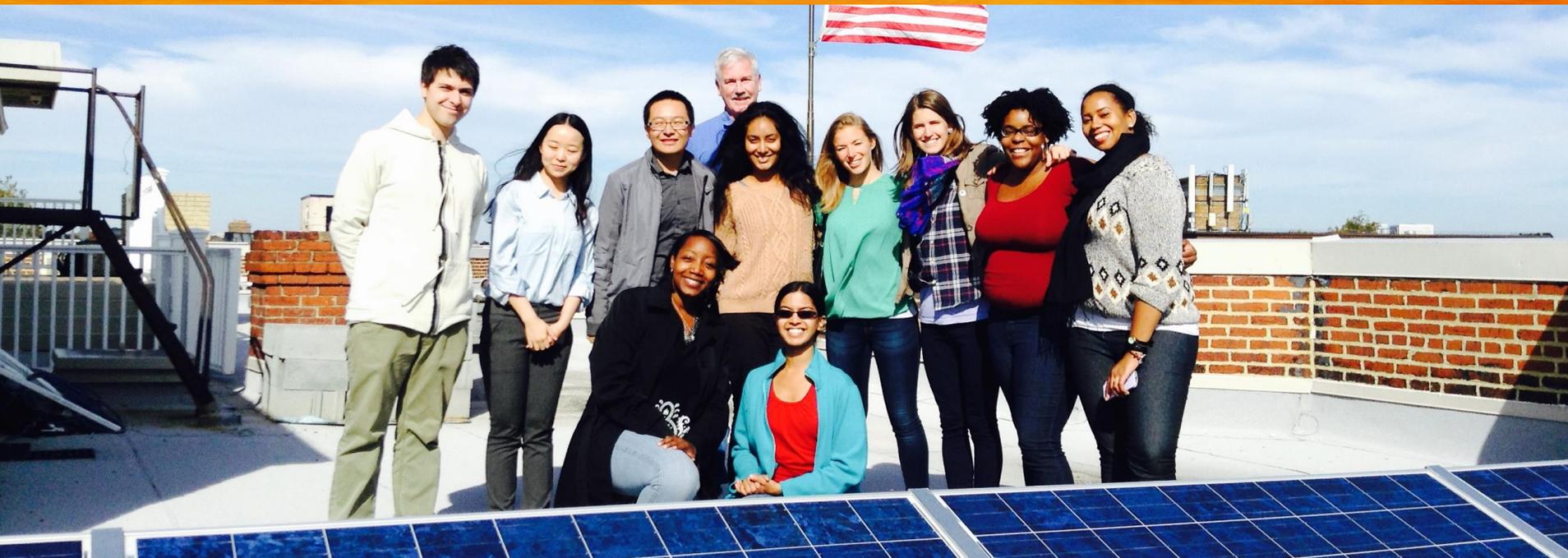




Letter to the Editor Rapid Response Training



Introductions



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Engagement Specialist
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AGENDA

Introductions

Zoom Logistics & Meeting Norms

Our Theory of Change

Drafting a Letter to the Editor: Why and How

LTE Story Sharing

Letter to the Editor Response Network: What and Why

Takeaways

Next Steps

Zoom Logistics

Audio:

You can **Mute/Unmute** your microphone by clicking the microphone icon at the bottom left of control bar. Please remain muted if you aren't speaking.

Video:

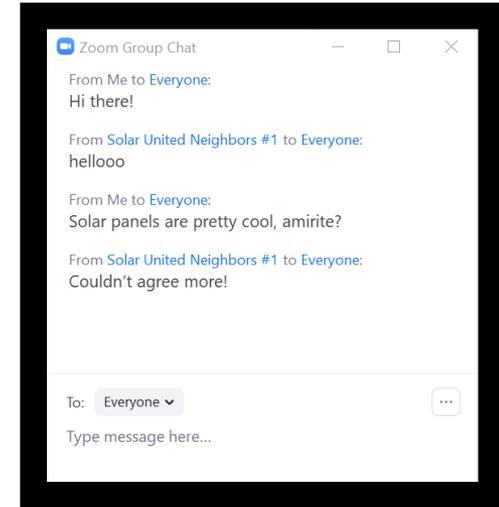
If your device has a camera, you can turn it on/off by clicking the **Start/Stop** icon at the bottom left.



Zoom Logistics

To Chat:

Click **Chat** to open up the **chat window** to view, send, and receive messages from everyone.



Choose Video Layout:

At the upper right of your screen, you can switch between **Speaker View** and **Gallery View**.

Meeting Norms

- **Be respectful**
- **Be courteous**
- **Be mindful of others' feelings**
- **Step Up, Step Back**
- **Please don't be shy. We want to hear from you!**



SOLAR UNITED NEIGHBORS

We're a community of people building a new energy system with rooftop solar at the cornerstone.



over
100,000
supporters



What is a Letter to the Editor? (LTE)

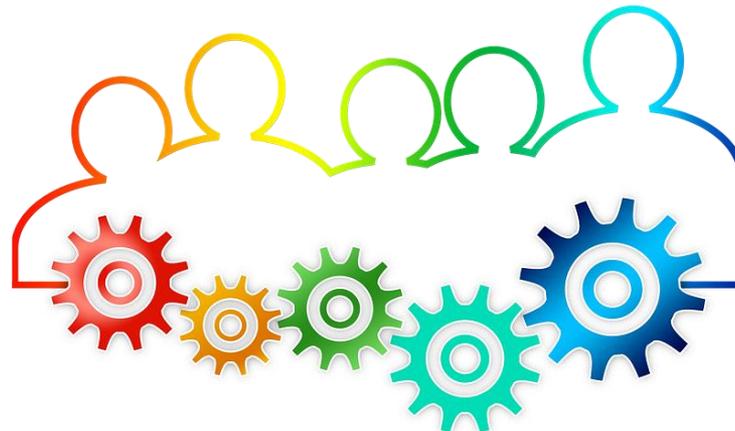
- A letter to the editor is a letter sent to a publication about issues of concern from its readers
- Letters to the Editor are often in response to an article published by the newspaper
- The writer of the letter either is praising the newspaper and bolstering the coverage of the article or writing an article in opposition to the coverage

Why are LTEs important?

Knowledge = Power

- Research shows that well-written, authentic LTEs by citizens can help to persuade editors, readers, and decision makers—who carefully monitor the content of LTE to gauge public opinion on **various issues**
- Public discourse: We get to really advocate for pro-solar policies and to push back against anti-solar policies. We get the opportunity to promote **MORE** people going solar

Writing an LTE is a meaningful and easy way to advocate for public policies



Poll

Have you written a Letter to the Editor before?



Steps to Writing a Letter to the Editor

1. First sentence: Explain what it is you're writing about and why it's important

Ex: "I am responding to the article "Solar for All" on March 24th..."

2. Body: tell a brief personal story involving the issue. A few facts/stats are good to include as support, but people often remember authentic stories

- You can explain why it matters to you, your family, business, or community

3. Close: with asking readers/elected official to take specific action

Ex: Contact the decision maker, sign a petition, vote, testify, join a co-op etc.

- I am asking that you look into joining the North West Indiana Solar Co-op Today!
- This is why I am urging Senator Bennet to support bill #202 to support net metering

TIPS & TO NOTE

- Assume your audience knows little or nothing about this issue
- Keep your message to no more than three important points
- Letters should be creative, written with passion and, if possible, personal. People are curious about individuals, like yours', opinion
- Note: many newspapers require personal info (name, address). This info will not be published. They will most likely contact you to ensure that the letter was written by you and to notify you that it will be published soon

Solar Share: Mike Murphy



Sample Letter: Columbus Dispatch, June 2020

Letter: Net-metering rules protect consumer, alternative energy

My family installed a rooftop solar array in 2017 because it was the right thing to do for the environment and producing our own energy lowers our electric bill. The majority of what we produce during the day goes out to the grid and is used by others. We receive credit from the electric utility for the power we contribute to the grid and draw on that credit at night when we are not producing.

This net-metering arrangement, used by over 49 states and territories, makes it possible to afford going solar.

Eliminating net metering would discourage millions from investing in solar systems, depriving all of us of the economic, environmental and public health benefits of solar energy. This could happen if the New England Ratepayers Association, a group representing utility interests, has its way. It has petitioned the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC Docket EL20-42) to eliminate states' rights to set energy policy, including net metering, and give that right to the federal government. A change in net-metering rules would mean the loss of many good-paying solar jobs.

With unemployment at high levels due to COVID-19, this is the last thing we need.

I urge Gov. Mike DeWine to let FERC know that Ohio is against NERA's petition and that we will fight to keep the right to regulate solar in our state. Readers can sign the petition at [savesolar.org](https://www.savesolar.org).

Carol Miller, Newark



Questions?



What is the Letter to the Editor Response Network?

This LTE Network is a network we are rolling out in the following states:

Colorado, Texas, Ohio, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Indiana

If your state is not listed, we hope to have more networks created in the future. You can also write a letter at any time to spread the word about solar!

1. You will be added to your state's LTE Network list serv
2. You will receive on average 1 to 3 emails a month with an article to respond to. The email will have guidelines for how to submit as well as talking points or a sample letter to refer to.
3. You can change your email preferences at any time

You will be given given all the resources you need to easily draft and submit a letter!

What is the process?



Frequency: You will receive on average 1-3 emails a month once you join the LTE Network



Context: the email will include an article to respond to, tips for writing your letter, and instructions for how to submit



Timing and Volume: Ideal to write a letter within 48 hours. It is more likely that your letter will be published. The more people who write the more likely a letter gets published.



Follow up: Calling the newspaper can make a big difference

Why is the Letter to the Editor Network Important?

Volume and Timing Matter:

It is can be hard to get media coverage on the issues we work on.

The higher the volume of people who submit a letter in a timely fashion about a certain topic the more likely the newspaper pays attention and publishes that letter

Note: It is not required to write a letter in response to every inquiry sent to the list serv

Note: the network is a two-way street

Takeaways

Please chat in: 1 thing you learned
1 lingering question



Poll

If applicable, will you join the Letter to the Editor Rapid Response Network in your state?

Networks are currently being launched in Colorado, Texas, Ohio, Indiana, Maryland and Pennsylvania

Please keep an eye out for a welcome email tomorrow & if you do not receive one, please connect with us at helpdesk@solarunitedneighbors.org



Poll

Do you want to be a Letter to the Editor Coordinator in your state?

Once a month:

Time commitment: ~ 1 hour

- Scan newspaper for articles pertaining to solar
- Draft email linking the article, talking points, and guidelines for submitting



Join Us

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/solarunitedneighbors

Website:

www.solarunitedneighbors.org

Instagram:

www.instagram.com/solarunitedneighbors



Thank You!