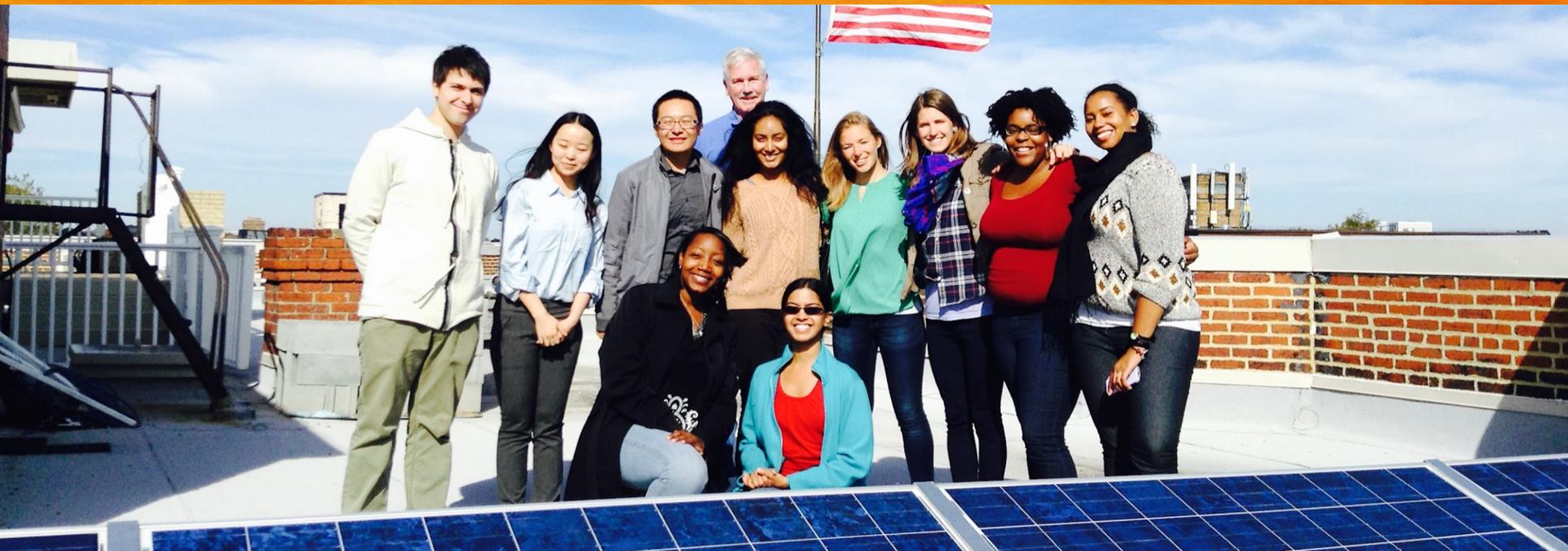




Letter to the Editor Rapid Response Training



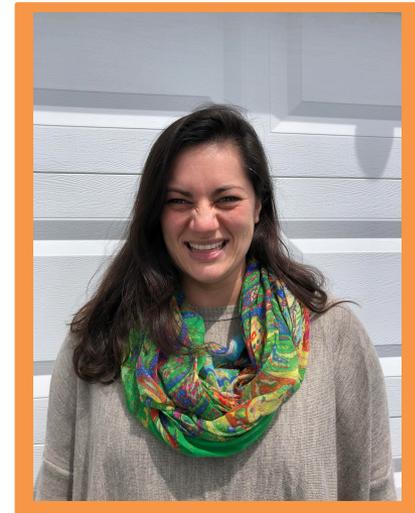
Introductions



Morgan Byrne
Engagement Specialist
(PA, WV, OH, IN)



Lisa Trope
Engagement Specialist
(CO, TX, AZ, MN)



Annie Wolf
Director of Membership &
Engagement

Poll

What brought you today?



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:

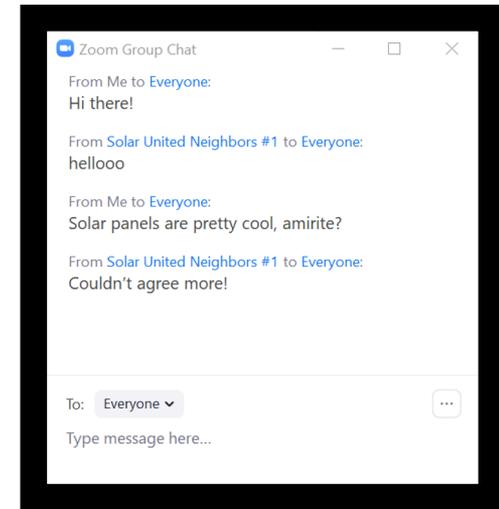
If your device has a camera, you can turn it on/off by clicking the **Start/Stop** icon at the bottom left.



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)

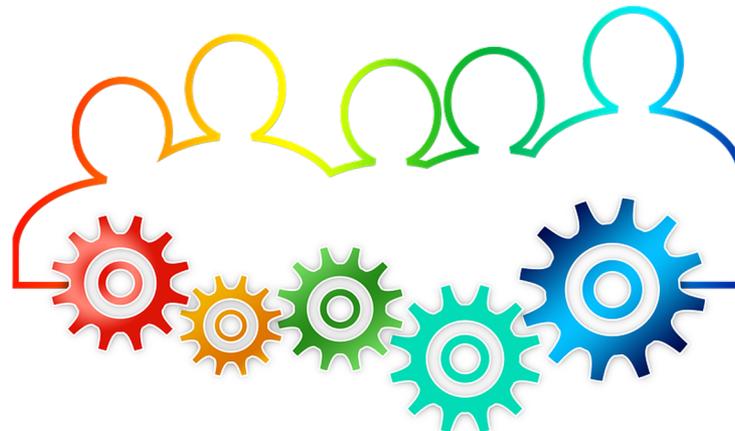
- A letter to the editor is a letter sent to a publication about issues of concern from its readers
- Letters to the Editor are often in response to an article published by the newspaper
- The writer of the letter either -
 - Praises the newspaper and bolsters the coverage of the article
 - OR
 - Opposes the coverage of the article

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



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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: Mohammed Nasrullah



Tips for a Successful LTE

- Address your letter
- Timely response
- Watch the word count
- Stay with one topic
- Keep it simple
- Criticize, but start with appreciation
- Supply truth/facts/sources
- Use relevant experience
- Establish your affiliation
- Be patient
- Never give up
- Try again

Mohammed Nasrullah

Member, East Houston Solar Co-op

Solar Home Owner

Bigmomkn@yahoo.com



Sample Letter: Indiana Business Journal, June 4th, 2021

Letter: Net-metering rules is key to solar

In reference to the article “Surrounded by solar” [May 21] about a proposed 1,600-acre solar farm threatening to surround some Zionsville-area homes, my wife and I built a new house a little more than a year ago and put solar panels on the roof.

In the last year, we have eliminated more than 23,900 pounds of carbon emissions, which is the same as planting 180 trees. Not only does the solar help to save us money, but we are also making a positive impact on our community and planet. We need both utility scale and rooftop solar for these reasons.

Not only do we get a benefit through cost reduction, but we also benefit all other consumers by supplying excess energy back to the grid. In addition to the cost reductions, think about the impact on carbon reductions if there is more solar energy from large utility scale solar installations and individual homes. Solar producers are making our world a healthier place.

However, to keep rooftop solar going in Indiana, we need to make sure that we keep net metering. This provides a benefit to everyone—the solar owner and the utility companies. Think about a hot sunny day in August when we are giving back energy to the grid so that the utility company does not have to stress their systems or build new power plants.

If net metering goes away, many solar owners would buy battery storage and hoard energy for their own use and not share back to the grid.

Solar is a win for everyone

Doug Prince



Questions?



What is the Letter to the Editor 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 listserv
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 listserv

Note: the network is a two-way street

Takeaways

Please chat in: 1 thing you learned
1 lingering question



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

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



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Do you want to be a Letter to the Editor Coordinator?

Openings in:

- Colorado
- Texas
- Pennsylvania
- Maryland

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!