Dear Members of the Interim Legislative Committee on Energy,

As major businesses and employers in Nevada, we write to express our support for the advancement of clean energy policies in the state. We applaud the clean energy policy accomplishments of the 2017 legislative session and urge you to continue this progress. We recognize that Nevada, given its substantial in-state resources, has a unique opportunity to grow its local economy and create jobs through increased commitment to and investment in renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy storage, and electric vehicles (EVs).

In June 2017, Governor Sandoval vetoed two important pieces of clean energy legislation, AB 206 and SB 392, which would have increased the state’s Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) and expanded consumer access to community solar, respectively. If signed, the bills would have spurred additional investment in the renewable energy resources companies increasingly seek and helped ensure that all customers are able to take advantage of the benefits of having more renewable energy on the grid. These policies are proven drivers of renewable energy deployment in both competitive retail and vertically integrated market structures. Regardless of the outcome of the Energy Choice Initiative, we support the reintroduction of these bills during the 2019 legislative session.

Our companies, like many other major businesses nationwide and globally, have set goals to invest in renewable energy or reduce greenhouse gas emissions. States with robust clean energy standards create policy certainty, attracting companies to make long-term investments consistent with meeting these goals. The current standard has already produced significant benefits, attracting nearly $6 billion in renewable energy investment between 2010 and 2014, all while helping businesses cut energy costs, avoid the volatility of fossil fuel prices, and stay competitive. Strengthening Nevada’s RPS would not only make the state more attractive to businesses, it would also allow Nevada to reduce its reliance on imported energy.

Community solar would allow all Nevada businesses, families, and communities to benefit from the state’s abundant solar resources. Community solar policies are in place in 16 states, a trend that continues to grow every year. Expanding shared solar access to all Nevadans presents a significant economic opportunity for the state. Analysis by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory projects this market could grow to 32-49 percent of the distributed solar market by 2020, representing $8.2 - $16.3 billion of cumulative investment. Companies will not only benefit from these programs. We can also play an essential role in facilitating access for others by sponsoring solar farms and serving as anchor tenants.

We commend the legislature on advancing energy efficiency, EVs, and energy storage in 2017. These technologies and services help businesses like ours meet both our sustainability and our financial goals. Energy efficiency provides our companies with options for cost savings, by reducing operating expenses and creating new revenue streams. Cleaner, more efficient vehicles help companies lower greenhouse gas
(GHG) emissions while allowing us to cut operating expenses in our company fleets. Accelerating the deployment of both EVs and energy storage will allow Nevada to keep a competitive edge in harnessing the public health, economic, and electric system benefits of these technologies.

We recognize that reducing GHGs and the pursuit of sustainability have become indispensable components of doing business responsibly and successfully. A recent analysis shows that renewable energy and energy efficiency are saving U.S. companies $3.7 billion a year, savings they can reinvest into their businesses, employees, and communities. Commitment to clean energy provides a clear, robust strategy to drive economic growth. A 2017 report found that more than 31,000 Nevadans work in clean energy, an increase of 9.5 percent from the previous year, making it the fastest growing sector in the state.

Clean energy does not just benefit the environment, it makes business sense. Strong clean energy policies will attract new investment, encourage innovation, save homeowners and businesses money on their energy bills, and create local jobs. We hope you will maintain Nevada’s leadership position in the new energy economy.

Thank you for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to call on us if we can provide additional information and share our experience as these important discussions progress.

Thank you,

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Levi Strauss and Co.
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Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows
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