THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON

August 27, 2012

Ms. Alicia Valdes President & CEO Bright Solar Systems Unit 1816 777 North Ashley Drive Tampa, Florida 33602

Dear Alicia:

Thank you for writing. I have heard from many Americans interested in science and technology, and I appreciate your perspective.

Government funding for scientific research has consistently yielded innovations that have improved the landscape of American life—from the Internet and digital photography to Global Positioning System (GPS) technology and laser surgery. Yet, over the last four decades, Federal funding for the physical, mathematical, and engineering sciences has remained flat at a time when other countries are substantially increasing their own research budgets. The United States is at risk of losing its scientific dominance. That is why I have proposed to double budgets at three key science agencies—the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy's Office of Science, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology laboratories.

To reaffirm our role as the engine that drives science and technology around the world, we must empower our Nation's youth with a competitive education and the tools to make tomorrow's breakthrough discoveries. Today, only 1 in 10 students graduate from college with degrees in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) subjects—areas critical to America's ability to compete for the jobs of the future. That is why I have proposed programs to help us meet our ambitious goals of training 100,000 new K-12 teachers in STEM subjects and preparing 1 million more American graduates in STEM fields over the next 10 years. I have also encouraged groups typically underrepresented in these fields—including young women—to pursue careers in STEM disciplines.

Equipping America with 21st-century digital infrastructure—such as high-speed broadband Internet access, fourth-generation (4G) wireless networks, new health care information technology, and a modernized electrical grid—is critical to our long-term prosperity and competitiveness. The Recovery Act has helped fund the expansion of broadband services nationwide, and the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act will further expand wireless broadband services and fund the development of a dedicated public safety broadband network. In

June 2012, I signed an Executive Order to make broadband construction along Federal roadways and properties up to 90 percent cheaper and more efficient. By connecting every corner of our country to the digital age, we can help our businesses become more competitive, our students more informed, and our communities more engaged.

I am also committed to ensuring America has a thriving and growing Internet economy. The Internet has become a global platform for communication, commerce, and individual expression, and now promises to support breakthroughs in important national priorities such as health care, education, energy, and the environment. Additionally, the Internet and information technology can be applied to make government more effective, transparent, and accessible to all Americans. I have pledged to preserve the free and open nature of the Internet, and created the Internet Policy Task Force to make sure the Internet remains a reliable and trustworthy resource for consumers. I have also made cybersecurity a top priority, because Americans deserve the security to shop, bank, communicate, and learn online without fearing their accounts will be hacked or their identity stolen.

To fast track our startups and enable them to bring products to market more quickly, I signed the America Invents Act in September 2011—the most meaningful reform to our patent process in 50 years. This legislation will help entrepreneurs and inventors secure patents three times faster than they could before, drastically cutting the time it takes to roll out novel technologies and products, and making it easier to turn new ideas into new businesses and new jobs. My Administration also worked with several private-sector partners to launch a series of new "Lab to Market" initiatives to encourage the commercialization of novel technologies flowing from our Federal research and development projects. Additionally, in 2011 I signed a Presidential Memorandum directing all Federal agencies with research facilities to accelerate the transfer of innovations from the laboratory to the commercial marketplace. We live at a time when our Nation's economy must become more dynamic and flexible than ever before, and these reforms will help us meet this challenge.

Thank you, again, for writing.

Sincerely,