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NEWS RELEASE

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FROM THE OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER LAUREN "BUBBA" MCDONALD

McDonald Testifies Before International Trade Commission in Opposition to Higher Tariffs on Solar Panels

ATLANTA, August 16, 2017 – Georgia Public Service Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald testified Tuesday before the United States International Trade Commission in Washington, D.C. in opposition to the proposed higher tariffs on imported solar cells and modules. Specifically, the issue is the proposed Section 201 safeguard case involving solar cell and module manufacturing in the United States.

In his testimony, Commissioner McDonald noted the progress that solar power has made in his home state of Georgia over the past ten years without state subsidies and upward pressure on rates. "We can continue this progress without government intervention in the market. The sky is the limit, provided we don't take actions that harm the industry. If the requested remedies are imposed, solar energy growth will draw to a standstill. That outcome would have a corresponding negative impact on jobs, economic development, property tax revenue, and investment in rural communities. It will also deprive consumers of the benefit of competitively priced solar projects," said Commissioner McDonald.

McDonald noted that competition and technological improvements have driven down the cost of solar projects, to the point that solar energy is competing with natural gas in many regions. But he said tariffs could threaten this progress. "Any tariffs imposed would distort the market, threatening tens of thousands of well-paying American jobs and harming the economic viability of Georgia's future solar projects," McDonald added. He also testified that a tariff on solar panels would result in the termination of the solar installation project now getting underway at Robins Air Base near Warner Robins, Georgia, costing the state \$2-3 billion in solar investment and jobs.

McDonald closed by adding that the companies seeking the Section 201 safeguards represent a minority of the marketplace. "They're here because their products are not economical and their business model is not competitive," McDonald noted.

The full text of his remarks is available on the web at
<http://www.psc.state.ga.us/content.aspx?c=/commissioners/lauren-mcdonald-jr/?tab=2>.

Commissioner McDonald is in his third term on the Commission, having been appointed and elected in 1998, and re-elected in 2008 and 2014. His full biography can be found at
<http://www.psc.state.ga.us/content.aspx?c=/commissioners/lauren-mcdonald-jr/?tab=2>.

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