

**STATE OF MINNESOTA
BEFORE THE
MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
AND
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS**

In the Matter of the Application of Benton Solar,)	
LLC for a Site Permit for the 100 MW Solar)	MPUC Docket No. IP7115/GS-23-423;
Energy Generating System, a Site Permit for)	IP7115/ESS-24-283;
the 100 MW Battery Energy Storage System,)	IP7115/TL-23-425
and a Route Permit for the Benton)	OAH Docket No. 28-2500-40508
115-kV Transmission Line for the Benton)	
Solar Project in Benton County, Minnesota.)	

SURREBUTTAL TESTIMONY OF

Adam Gracia

On behalf of

BENTON SOLAR, LLC

August 15, 2025

I. INTRODUCTION

Q. Please state your name and title.

A. My name is Adam Gracia. I am employed by NextEra Energy Resources, LLC (“NEER”) as a project director, including directing project development for Benton Solar, LLC (“Benton Solar”), a wholly owned indirect subsidiary of NEER.

Q. Have you previously provided testimony in this proceeding?

A. Yes. I provided direct and rebuttal testimony in this proceeding.

Q. What is the purpose of your surrebuttal testimony?

A. The purpose of my surrebuttal testimony is to respond to the rebuttal testimony of Laborers’ International Union of North America Minnesota and North Dakota (“LiUNA”) witness Lucas Franco.

**II. RESPONSE TO ASSERTIONS ABOUT BENTON SOLAR’S COMMITMENT TO
USING UNION LABOR**

Q. Dr. Franco’s rebuttal testimony asserts that he is “concerned” that Benton Solar will not “fulfill[]” its public commitment to use union labor. (Franco Rebuttal at 1:14-34). Do you agree with his assertions?

A. No. Dr. Franco’s concerns are misplaced for several reasons. First, Benton Solar has specifically and publicly committed to utilizing union labor to construct its facilities. In February 2025, Benton Solar signed a letter committing to selecting and hiring an Engineering, Construction and Procurement (“EPC”) contractor that will use union labor and negotiate and enter into a site-specific project labor agreement (“Commitment Letter”). Benton Solar provided the Commitment Letter to LiUNA, the International Union of Operating Engineers, and North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters Local 1382,

1 as well as filed the Commitment Letter in this docket. (Response to Scoping Comments
2 from Benton Solar, LLC at App. A, Feb. 12, 2025, eDockets ID No. [20252-215314-01](#).)
3 The Commitment Letter, Benton Solar’s response to the scoping comments, and my prior
4 testimony are unequivocal in their pledge to using union labor, and they are all part of the
5 record before the Public Utilities Commission. (*Id.* at p. 12 & App. A; Gracia Direct at
6 8:21-9:4).

7 Second, NEER subsidiaries have a long and proven history of utilizing union labor
8 in Minnesota. The Commitment Letter confirms that Benton Solar will continue this
9 practice, and no evidence exists to the contrary. As noted in Dr. Franco’s direct testimony
10 and in compliance filings, NEER subsidiary wind projects have consistently staffed
11 projects with union labor.¹

12 Third, Benton Solar has already taken the concrete steps outlined in its
13 Commitment Letter, all of which ensure union labor will be utilized to construct the project.
14 Consistent with its Commitment Letter, Benton Solar has executed an EPC agreement with
15 Blattner Energy, Inc. (“Blattner”) to construct the project. Because Blattner is signatory to
16 collective bargaining agreements with certain building trades unions in Minnesota, Benton
17 Solar’s project will necessarily be constructed utilizing local union labor. Moreover,
18 Blattner recently finalized a specific project labor agreement (“PLA”) with the unions,
19 including LiUNA. Benton Solar was pleased to learn through Blattner that LiUNA signed
20 the PLA shortly before the filing of this testimony.

¹ Franco Direct, App. 14 A at 11-12; Q4 Labor Statistics Report for Walleye Wind, LLC, Feb. 14, 2023, eDockets ID No. [20232-193141-01](#); Q4 Labor Statistics Report for Buffalo Ridge Wind, LLC, Feb. 14, 2023, eDockets ID No. [20232-193140-01](#); Q4 Labor Statistics Report for FPL Energy Mower County Wind, LLC, Feb. 12, 2021, eDockets ID No. [20212-170963-01](#) (“[The EPC] was able to fully staff all construction workforce needs through the following unions Local 49 – Operators; Local 512 – Ironworkers; Local 405 – Laborers; and Local 548 – Millwrights.”); Q3 Lake Benton Power Partners II, LLC, Nov. 14, 2019, [201911-157547-01](#).

1 Benton Solar is also encouraged that the above-listed commitments and actions
2 align with LiUNA's responses to Benton Solar's information requests. These responses
3 clarify and acknowledge that requiring projects to comply with specific percentages of
4 local, union labor may not be feasible. In this way, Benton Solar and LiUNA appear to
5 share a common interest in maximizing the use of local, union labor while also appreciating
6 the difficulties of being able to accurately forecast or predict the availability of local, union
7 labor far in advance of construction.

8 **Q. Dr. Franco's rebuttal testimony cites experiences with the NEER subsidiary that**
9 **constructed Oliver IV in North Dakota. (Franco Rebuttal at 1:17-18 & 1:31-34). Do**
10 **you have a response to his rebuttal testimony regarding Oliver IV?**

11 A. No. I have already addressed these same issues in my rebuttal testimony. (Gracia Rebuttal
12 at 6:14-21, 7:3-13, 8:10-17).

13 **Q. Does this conclude your surrebuttal testimony?**

14 A. Yes.