

ABOUT THE EVENT:

Rosemead City Hall

8838 East Valley Boulevard
Rosemead, CA 91770

Date and time: 11/08/2019 10:00 am to 12:00 pm PST

The United States is currently home to over 43 million immigrants and over 3 million have started small businesses. These companies pay an estimated \$126 billion in wages to six million people and generating over \$65 billion in income. Recognizing their economic contributions, the hearing will focus on how the federal government can better assist immigrant entrepreneurs desiring to start a small business. Members will learn why immigrants are more likely to start new businesses but less likely to have access to traditional sources of capital, and how the Small Business Administration's programs, such as entrepreneurial development and lending programs like the Community Advantage program can help immigrant business owners succeed.

Amir Salahi's Opening Statement:

Mrs. Chairwoman, respected members of the committee and dear witnesses... I am honored and humbled to be here today.

Thank you very much for inviting me to this field hearing to talk about "how the SBA can Empower Immigrant Small Business Owners".

Nearly 10% of the 43 Million immigrants in the U.S. have become entrepreneurs by starting small and medium size businesses. They pay ONE HUNDRED TWENTY SIX BILLION dollars in wages every year in local communities. And, they generate over SIXTY BILLION dollars in annual income.

Ladies and Gentlemen, my name is Amir Salahi and I am proud to be an immigrant entrepreneur who had the privilege to move to the land of opportunity in 2007.

I am an electrical Engineer with a Masters in Engineering Management.

My professional life in the United States started by working for some bigger companies in cleantech and renewables... My amazing partner, Chris Gregory and I were among the top 1% of producers at a huge solar company. But I always wanted to start my own business, so I was looking for an opportunity to solve a problem and turn it into a great company.

I am the Founder and CEO of RenuLogix (~~also known as Energy Advisor Hub~~) We empower small and medium sized solar installers. For the past two and a half years we have been

developing, testing and launching a cloud-based integrated solar installation system. For the smaller solar installer, RenuLogix is the first system of its kind ... **in the world.**

Three years ago, we decided to take the first step towards our entrepreneurial dream and that was when our small business journey started.

Along the way, we received some awesome startup consulting from SBA advisors who helped us find our way at the early stages of our business. Thank you, SBA! Thank you, Don Loewel!

|| These are exciting times in the solar industry.

Over \$1 trillion dollars worth of solar panels will be installed on the rooftops of homes in the U.S. in the next 3 decades.

However, THREE major companies carry out nearly half of all residential solar installations in the U.S. Huge companies you've heard of.

That leaves over half of all solar installations in the U.S. in the hands of small and medium size solar companies. There are over ten thousand of them across the nation.

These smaller installers have challenges. They have no brand presence like the big guys. They have almost no marketing budget.

Where the three big guys have built their own integrated systems to produce quotes, connect with financing firms, project manage their installations and stay in touch with their customers, smaller installers tend to run their businesses with spreadsheets and post-it notes.

And they have no buying power, so their profit margins are razor thin.

Nevertheless . smaller solar companies have created thousands of jobs in our local communities so they deserve our attention...

As congresswoman Judy Chu has said "by investing in renewable energy, we not only put Americans back to work, we also preserve our planet and our natural resources for future generations.

So, I would like to thank Congresswoman Chu and her colleagues for their continued support of clean power, including solar.

Solar will be the predominant source of energy for our planet in the coming decades. There is no cleaner, more convenient source.

Congresswoman Chu, we need your help and your colleagues' help more than ever before to pass and approve legislation, and provide credits and incentives to expedite our transition from limited, dirty fossil fuels to UNlimited renewables.

And we need your help more than ever before to realize the huge economic benefit that comes from making this shift. The move to renewables isn't a COST to this country, it's an opportunity. A big one.

America has already ceded leadership in solar panels to China and we may be in the process of ceding leadership in other technologies. But we are still number one in digital innovation. And immigrants can help the United States extend that lead.

Immigrants represent only 13% of the US population ... but nearly 30% of the country's entrepreneurs. The Huffington Post, Red Bull, Tesla, SpaceX, and Google are just a few well-known examples of companies founded by immigrant entrepreneurs.

A Harvard Business Review study suggests that public money may be better spent on building incubators for migrant entrepreneurs than on building border walls.

{Immigrants come armed with "cross-cultural experience," one that, perhaps, gives us the opportunity to paint with a more colorful business palette and to identify promising business ideas.}

In the first quarter of 2020, RenuLogix plans to launch a radical <thoughtful seems a bit too watered down to me> new community program. We plan to do this work because it will benefit small business and because it will accelerate our progress to a renewable future.

We will train and certify hundreds of smaller solar installers and other small businesses. We will give them the tools and the competence to compete with the big guys. We are expert at building online tools: using an online curriculum and certification process, we plan to start right here in Southern California. Our goal is to make small, struggling solar companies more professional, more competitive, more able to grow. We will have a strong focus on immigrant entrepreneurs in our outreach.

With the SBA's help, we also plan to train and certify hundreds of underprivileged youngsters, with particular concentration on immigrant communities. We will train them in every aspect of solar from sales to installation, show them how to join solar installers and dealers, and how to build their own businesses.

We will be looking for your suggestions and your support. We estimate that this program alone could be worth hundreds of millions of dollars to the economy of Southern California, and help cut <billions?> of tons of carbon emissions.

Thank you. I look forward to discussing with you.