



Prepared Testimony and Statement

For the Record of

Tom Greer, Owner/Brewer

Hub City Brewing Co, LLC

US Congressional Committee on Small Business Subcommittee
on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Workforce Development

Hearing Title:

Wealth for the Working Class:

” The Clean Energy Economy”

July 27, 2021

Via Zoom

Hub City Brewing Co. at the Rail Café
202 Desoto Ave. at the Rail Runner Station
Belen, New Mexico 87002

Good morning. My name is Tom Greer and I'm the owner of Hub City Brewing Co in the small rural town of Belen, NM 25 miles south of Albuquerque.

I grew up in East Lansing, MI and my family was typical in those times, 1950-1970, of the American Middle Class. Two kids, dad who had solid job and a mom who was highly underrated as a homemaker. I attended Michigan State University and began my career as a Professor at Lansing Community College as the Media Dept Curriculum Coordinator during the economic recession of 1974-1975. I worked directly with hundreds of out of work union blue collar auto workers, many who could only fall back on their veteran's education benefits and unemployment to keep their families afloat. I moved to NYC to be a Professor at Long Island University's Brooklyn Campus. My students were predominantly African American and I'll never forget them regularly walking me to the subway station after my night classes to make sure I got on the train safely.

I was recruited by J. Walter Thompson in 1980 at the time home shopping and the new satellite delivered TV industry was launched and became VP-Director of New Media Development where my job was to introduce the JWT clients to the new media opportunities. Since leaving JWT in 1982 I have created and run numerous television production and tourism related businesses in NY, CO, MT and currently NM.

We moved to Belen, NM in 2005. Climate, proximity to a large city, airport and Interstate Highway access and the Southern terminus of the new Rail Runner commuter train presented an exciting challenge and we thought we could make a difference.

The Rail Café opened in 2007. Then the housing collapse of 2008 hit Belen very hard. The café closed in 2008 but we kept the building. A booming microbrewery industry in NM lead to our opening Hub City Brewing Co in 2016. Then came the pandemic in early 2019. 15 months of struggles with being open, closed, carryout only, outdoor seating at 25% during the height of winter, on again-off again. Despite that, we have made it thru to today.

How does a small business like mine continue in operation and to thrive in this post-pandemic world? We are currently facing food and supply shortages, transportation issues, big spikes in the costs of supplies and services, difficulties in finding reliable employees. We need to make improvements and repairs and the

cost of building supply are at an all-time high. The last thing we need are more federal and state regulations, higher business taxes and higher energy costs.

Profit margins in the restaurant/brewery industry are slim. We already face increased insurance costs, an unpredictable labor market and a cumbersome regulatory environment.

We use a lot of electricity in our food and brewing processes and are blessed with an abundant and affordable clean energy source in Natural Gas here in NM.

Natural gas plays a role in the “all of the above” smart plan along with wind and solar that I support here in NM.

We have plenty of natural gas and petroleum domestically, so we don't want to be held hostage again by other producing countries, many that are not our friends. We have in the past seen what \$4.00 + gas prices does to our economy and particularly to our lower wage earners as a % of their income.

We need federal regulations that are predictable so we can plan long term. We can't just change the rules in the middle of the game which seems to happen too often.

We can't afford higher federal taxes rates on businesses, particularly small ones like mine that are already struggling to stay open and serve their communities. Small family-owned businesses are the backbone of both our rural and minority owned inner city businesses.

Re-funding the SBA “Restaurant Revitalization” Grant program is essential. Eliminate the “special class” designation that got priority funding as it hurt many communities it was intended to help. While I am an old white guy, likely last in line and not funded, I serve a predominantly blue collar, rural, Hispanic community.

We have made a difference in this small rural community. We have survived COVID, but it is sad that so many businesses around our state have not. Many have failed not because they didn't have a good idea but rather the mandates of local, state and federal governments were simply impossible to overcome.

Thanks again for letting me share the Hub City Brewing Co story with you today.