

Dear Student Sustainable Committee,

I am writing to you to express my support for maintaining and repairing the Solar House located on the ABE farm grounds. This facility is a wonderful educational resource that shows the viability of sustainable architecture. It is also a prime example of the award-winning work the University does to advance the state of the art.

In addition to being an educational resource, the Solar House is in the perfect location to support research taking place in and around the ABE farms. I am a first year PhD student who works on agricultural robotics and as such I frequently work in the field to perform tests. This summer, my research group was able to make extensive use of the house as we conducted research. It allowed us to hold meetings, perform tests, store equipment and perform repairs all in the field without the need to return to campus.

The Solar House was constructed nearly ten years ago and is beginning to show the signs of wear and tear that naturally occur with any building. Issues include deterioration of the exterior siding, insulation problems and the fact that the wiring is not up to code. It is important that we maintain and repair the Solar House so it can continue to provide a space for educating the public about sustainable housing and as an operational space for researchers working in the surrounding farms. It would be unfortunate if this valuable resource were allowed to fall into disrepair and become unusable.

Thank you for the consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, followed by the date "11/9/2020" written in a similar cursive style.

Benjamin Walt

Letter of support for Solar House repair.  
To Student Sustainable Committee (SSC),

I would like to express my support for the renovations proposed to the Solar House in Autonomous Farm and I want to share my experience of using the house for research during the season.

I am currently a Ph.D. student in the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering and a Graduate Research Assistant that works with robotics in agricultural environments. Consequently, my research field is highly connected to the agricultural season period and, because of it, we need to make this time count as much as possible.

During this year, we had the Autonomous Farm fully available during the season to perform experiments, develop and test new algorithms, and the Solar House was used as our laboratory on the spot. The Solar House was an important place to tweak the code, solve code bugs, implement new methods, give maintenance to the robots, and recharge the batteries.

Over the past few months, I have been working at the Solar House almost every day, and our research has never been so efficient. I strongly believe the Solar House was essential for us to achieve the amazing results we had this year and I also believe these results can be even better next year. However, the house needs some maintenance as some parts are already getting degraded over time. Some exposed wood is getting rotten and the place could be restored to guarantee students' and researcher's safety, as well as it can become a proper place to work. Therefore, I believe the Solar House repair can be made to make it an even better place to work during the summer and make our progress even more efficient as we expect for the next season.

Kind regards,



Mateus Valverde Gasparino  
Graduate Research Assistant  
Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering

11/06/2020

Letter of support for Solar Decathlon Re-House renovation

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to support the renovation of the solar decathlon house at the ABE farm. As a graduate student working on Agricultural Robotics, field tests are an integral part of my autonomy research. Along with my lab members, I visited the Illinois Autonomous Farm at the ABE farm 3 times a week throughout the summer from June to October, 2020 to validate the algorithms on our agricultural robot, Terrasentia in the farm. Having access to the Solar Decathlon house during this time enabled us to be in the field for long hours of time to debug and test our algorithms. This in turn has resulted in tremendous acceleration of our research progress as a group this season. In addition to being a workspace, the house provided much needed respite and helped keep ourselves energized during long days of toil in the field. Also, with the internet and communication facilities in the house, we were able to work together with other members of our lab offline during the testing times of this pandemic. Renovating the house will help us to continue to make rapid strides in agricultural autonomy research for sustainable agriculture at Illinois in the forthcoming years and so I believe it is necessary to support this facility.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "V.S. Arun". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Arun Narenthiran Veeranampalayam Sivakumar.

Graduate Research Assistant

Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering

Dear SSC,

I am a senior PhD student working in the LLVM group supervised by Dr. Vikram Adve in the Computer Science Department at the University of Illinois. I am writing to argue in support of the Agriculture and Bioengineering Farm, Research and Training center Farm (ABE Farm).

In collaboration with Dr. Girish's students, I have been working on the ABE farm between August and October this year. The Solar house at the ABE Farm has allowed us to do interdisciplinary research at the intersection of Compilers, Machine learning, and Agriculture. For setting up our field experiments, the Solar house greatly benefitted. Overall, I greatly enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity to work with state-of-the-art AgRobots that allowed us to realize the real-world impact of our compiler optimizations in the LLVM group.

The facilities at the ABE farm and the Solar house have greatly facilitated our work and I would humbly request that these facilities be continually funded so we can continue to do great research and keep contributing to the University of Illinois.



Hashim Sharif  
University of Illinois  
PhD Student, Research Assistant

11/10/2020

Letter of Support for Solar Decathlon Re-home Repair and Renovations

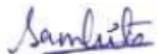
Dear Student Sustainable Committee,

I am writing this letter to show my full support for the repairs and renovations to be made in the Solar Decathlon Re-home.

I recently joined during this Fall and as a graduate research assistant, I'm part of the autonomous berry picking robot project. Although my joining is new, I visited the center over this semester frequently to learn, understand and work on the system. Last summer, the team planted various cherry tomato plants, strawberries and blueberries to test the robot system and findings near the solar house. This clearly shows one of the many benefits of having a workable environment close to our testing fields. The center served as a perfect collaboration center for our team members to integrate our modules. It also served as a networking platform for interaction with other teams to discuss some of the common problems in our projects.

Over my visits, I could see the prominent damage on the wooden deck on the exterior. Additionally, the farm center had to be cleared out once the winter season began because of no heating. Other noticing issues of over 9 years from utilizing the center are the wear and tear of the wall siding, insulation and deteriorated wiring. The funding can greatly help us fix these issues so that the center can continue to serve as a sustainable workplace for various teams working on projects catering to sustainable and efficient farming.

Regards,



Samhita Marri

Graduate Research Assistant

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

Dear SSC,

I am writing to support the proposed renovation of the Solar house at the Agriculture and Bioengineering Farm, Research and Training center Farm (ABE Farm).

I am a PhD student in the research group supervised by Dr. Vikram Adve in the Computer Science Department at UIUC. Our group has been collaborating with Dr. Girish Chowdhary's group, and I have been working on the ABE farm between August and October this year.

ABE farm greatly facilitated our research project, and the experiences working there was great. The Solar house is the indoor workspace we were using during our experiments there. For the preparation of our field experiments, such as coding, robot setup, and student discussions, it greatly helped and was critical.

To us and other researchers working there, the solar house being in good condition is vital for these research activities on the ABE farm. I sincerely hope you at SSC can see the importance of these facilities and fund this renovation, so that the many researchers and research projects on the farm are unhindered and keep contributing to the university.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yifan Zhao', written in a cursive style.

Yifan Zhao

Graduate research assistant, PhD student  
Computer Science Department