

**NASEO Agriculture and Rural Development  
Task Force Meeting**  
Tuesday February 11, 2003  
Washington, DC

Meeting Summary

NASEO's Agriculture and Rural Development Task Force met in conjunction with the NASEO Annual Energy Outlook Meeting in Washington D.C. The Task Force meeting brought together states and program partners on the Federal level to discuss program priorities and the status of potential funding opportunities for State Energy Offices.

Agenda Item 1: Introduction

Introduction and welcome by Sharon Tahtinen (IA), Chair, NASEO Agriculture and Rural Development Task Force; and Larry Pearce (NE), Vice Chair, NASEO Agriculture and Rural Development Task Force.

- ? Sharon Tahtinen welcomed the group and invited Alexander Mack (FL) to provide participants with an update on the status of STAC's Biomass working group:
  - o Alexander Mack notified the group that the budget for STAC was not yet complete, but informed states that the program would create a variety of opportunities for states and other groups to partner. Mr. Mack encouraged participation in the Biomass working group as priorities for this program area are being determined.

Agenda Item 2: Title IX (Energy) of the 2002 Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002: Renewable Energy System and Energy Efficiency Improvements program (Sec. 9006)

William Hagy, Deputy Administer, Business Program, Department of Agriculture-Rural Development; Rural Business-Cooperative Service

- ? William Hagy's update addressed the status of Section 9006 as well as an overview of the solicitation process. Summary points addressed by Mr. Hagy included:
  - o Regional coordination is not necessarily recommended—states may run into overall funding limit
  - o Funding will be obligated by letter of condition—when project participants have met the conditions, funding will be released. USDA will want funding to show direct results
  - o Solicitation is scheduled to be released in mid-March—Frank Bishop will forward solicitation notice to NASEO members
  - o The aggregation of small farms (state assisted) to make one application is acceptable, as long as the group can be defined as a small rural business (e.g. cooperative)
  - o If farms are aggregated over multiple states, the application should come from where the business is head-quartered
  - o USDA recommends that state should meet with and get to know their regional program manager—NASEO has sent a link to the Task Force with this information
  - o USDA will train program managers to assist states with the application process

Agenda Item 3: NASEO Activity Update

Frank Bishop, Executive Director, NASEO

- ? Frank Bishop's presentation focused on the status of Agriculture-related items NASEO has been working on over the past several months:
  - o NASEO has been following the status of Title 9 in the Agriculture Bill

- o NASEO continues to compile a list of state success stories with approximately 90 on the web
- o A letter has been sent to USDA in support of Title 9
- o NASEO has followed the budget on Agriculture programs closely
- o NASEO has voiced support on behalf of the membership for full funding of program 9006

Meeting Adjourned.

*Attachment A: Agenda*

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Tuesday February 11, 2003, 4:30 – 5:30 p.m.

The Westin Grand, 2350 M Street NW, Washington, DC 20037

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AGENDA

1. Introduction—Sharon Tahtinen (IA), Chair; and Larry Pearce (NE), Vice Chair, Agriculture and Rural Development Task Force
2. NASEO Activity Update—Frank Bishop, Executive Director, NASEO
3. Program Update (Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy – Program 9006)—William Hagy, Deputy Administrator, Business Programs, U.S. Department of Agriculture—Rural Development; Rural Business – Cooperative Service
4. Roundtable Discussion—Sharon Tahtinen