

Support for Rural Energy for America Program

April 29, 2021

The Honorable Sanford Bishop, Chairman
House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin, Chair
Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry, Ranking Member
House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee

The Honorable John Hoeven, Ranking Member
Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee

Dear Chair Bishop, Chair Baldwin, Ranking Member Fortenberry, and Ranking Member Hoeven:

We the undersigned organizations urge you to support the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) with full mandatory funding as you consider agriculture appropriations legislation for fiscal year 2022. In addition, please appropriate \$20 million in discretionary funding to support and strengthen the program. REAP is essential to rural climate policy and drives renewable energy and energy efficiency investments benefiting farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses in every state and across agricultural sectors.

The 2018 Farm Bill once again demonstrated that REAP enjoys strong bipartisan support. Since its inception, REAP has helped over 19,000 farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses to produce clean energy, cut energy costs, and boost rural economic development. Further, growing new opportunities with modern technologies helps to keep younger generations in rural areas and in farming. REAP is popular and widely supported, with requests historically exceeding available funds each year.

Importantly, REAP investments leverage high private investment in our rural communities. REAP increases rural economic development and grows new opportunities for rural small businesses and agricultural producers. Since the 2014 Farm Bill, REAP has leveraged more than \$6 billion in private investment in rural economies.

REAP opens new opportunities to increase income for farmers and rural small businesses in every state and across agricultural sectors. REAP supports a wide range of renewable energy and energy efficiency technology choices, including wind and solar power, advanced biofuels, farm digesters and energy efficiency that cut farm input costs. REAP also creates new revenue streams, increasing farm income at a time when rural communities are struggling with a multiyear slump in the farm economy.

Maintaining mandatory REAP funding and providing full discretionary funding in FY 2022 will help bring the benefits of the program to more farmers, ranchers, and rural small businesses.

The 2018 Farm Bill included \$50 million per year in mandatory funding and allows for \$20 million in discretionary funding. This funding level will enable REAP to continue to serve interested farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses and encourage more rural investment.

We support the inclusion of report language from FY 2021 encouraging the Department of Agriculture to establish a reserve fund for under-utilized renewable technologies. We urge that this reserve fund be supported in FY 2022 with \$10 million of discretionary funding to enhance the diversity of energy technologies deployed through the program

REAP has a strong track record of success, and with full mandatory and discretionary funding REAP will benefit even more farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses across the country while helping to meet our nation's pressing energy, environmental and rural economic development needs. And as Congress considers opportunities to address infrastructure and climate legislation, significantly increasing support for REAP to \$300 million per year would ensure rural communities are part of the clean energy and energy efficiency economy.

Importantly, by reducing energy input costs, REAP provides relief to farmers struggling with low commodity prices while providing an effective way for rural America to be part of the climate solution.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Advanced Biofuels Association
Agriculture Energy Coalition
American Biogas Council
American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy
American Council on Renewable Energy
Business Council for Sustainable Energy
Center for Rural Affairs
Clean Energy Economy Minnesota
Coalition for Renewable Natural Gas
Distributed Wind Energy Association
Environmental and Energy Study Institute
Environmental Law & Policy Center
Geothermal Alliance of Illinois
Geothermal Exchange Organization
Green State Solutions
Hawaii Farmers Union United
Integrated Power Contracting LLC
Interfaith Power & Light
Iowa Environmental Council
Iowa Farmers Union
Iowa Solar Energy Trade Association
KY Poultry Federation
League of Conservation Voters
Live Oak Bank
Michigan Farmers Union

Minnesota Farmers Union
Mississippi Poultry Assn Inc
National Association of State Energy Officials
National Center for Appropriate Technology
National Farmers Union
National Interfaith Power & Light
National Rural Lenders Association
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Wildlife Federation
National Young Farmers Coalition
New England Farmers Union
Northwest Farmers Union
South Carolina Poultry Federation
Solar Energy Industries Association
Solar United Neighbors
Solutions from the Land
Texas Poultry Federation
The Poultry Federation
Tennessee Poultry Association
Union of Concerned Scientists
Vote Solar
WindSolar USA, Inc.
Wisconsin Farmers Union