

Support Letter Rural Energy for America Program

April 3, 2018

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Chairman
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,
and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Conaway
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,
and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
1010 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Roberts, Ranking Member Stabenow, Chairman Conaway, Ranking Member Peterson:

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to support inclusion of the Rural Energy for America (REAP) program with increased or, at the least, maintained mandatory funding in the next Farm Bill. REAP drives renewable energy and energy efficiency investments benefiting farmers, ranchers, and rural small businesses in every state and across the agricultural sectors.

REAP was created in the 2002 Farm Bill. Since its inception, this program has helped 15,000 farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses produce clean energy, cut energy costs, and boost rural economic development. REAP has enjoyed bipartisan support.

Importantly, REAP investments – including both grants and loan guarantees - leverage far more private investment in our rural communities. REAP plays a critical role in increasing investment in rural economic development and growing new opportunities for rural small businesses and agricultural producers. Since the 2008 Farm Bill, REAP has leveraged more than \$4 billion in private investment in rural economies.

REAP opens new opportunities to save and make money 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 technologies 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.

Increasing or maintaining mandatory funding for REAP will help bring the benefits of the program to more farmers, ranchers, and rural small businesses. Lower funding levels limit the ability of REAP to serve rural America and deter applications and investments.

REAP is popular and widely supported, with requests for project funding exceeding available funds each year. This is not surprising, given that profit margins for rural small businesses and farmers improve as they cut energy costs with modern energy efficiency and generate their own energy through renewable energy technologies. Further, growing new opportunities with modern technologies helps to keep younger generations in rural areas and in farming.

REAP has a strong track record of success, and with sufficient mandatory funding we believe that REAP will continue to benefit farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses across the country while helping meet our nation's pressing energy, environmental, and rural economic development needs. Importantly, by reducing energy input costs, REAP provides relief to farmers struggling with low commodity prices. We encourage you to ensure that REAP continues to be a high priority within the farm bill with robust funding.

Sincerely,

25x'25 Alliance

Advanced Biofuels Association

Agriculture Energy Coalition

Alaska Farmers Union

American Coalition for Ethanol

American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy

Arkansas Advanced Energy Association

Arkansas Farmers Union

Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives

Bio Nebraska Life Sciences Association

Biocom

Business Council for Sustainable Energy

Center for Rural Affairs

Clean Energy Economy Minnesota

CROPP Cooperative | Organic Valley

Dakota Resource Council

Delta Land & Community

Environmental Law & Policy Center

Farmers Electric Cooperative

Fresh Energy

Georgia Corn Growers Association

Georgia Interfaith Power & Light

Georgia Poultry Federation

Geothermal Alliance of Illinois

Geothermal Exchange Organization

Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy

Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association

Gulf States Renewable Energy

Illinois Environmental Council

Illinois Solar Energy Association
Indiana Farmers Union
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Interfaith Power & Light
Interwest Energy Alliance
Iowa Environmental Council
Iowa Solar Energy Trade Association
Kansas Farmers Union
Kentucky Interfaith Power & Light
Kentucky Poultry Federation
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
Michigan Farmers Union
Minnesota Farmers Union
Mississippi Poultry Association
Missouri Farmers Union
Montana Farmers Union
National Association of Energy Service Companies
National Center for Appropriate Technology
National Farmers Union
National Rural Lenders Association
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
Nebraska Ethanol Board
Nebraska Farmers Union
New England Farmers Union
New York Interfaith Power & Light
North Dakota Alliance for Renewable Energy
North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives
North Dakota Farmers Union
Ohio Environmental Council
RENEW Wisconsin
Rural Advantage
Solar Energy Industries Association
South Dakota Biotech
South Dakota Farmers Union
Southeast Ag & Forestry Energy Resources Alliance
Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance
Southwest Mississippi Resource Conservation and Development, Inc.
Spark Northwest
Sustainable Energy Action Team - Michigan
Tennessee Poultry Association
Texas Poultry Federation
The American Biogas Council
The Coalition for Renewable Natural Gas
The Poultry Federation

The Stella Group, Ltd.
Union of Concerned Scientists
Utah Clean Energy
Utah Farmers Union
VoteSolar
Windustry

cc: Members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees