

Support Letter Rural Energy for America Program

April 3, 2019

The Honorable Sanford Bishop, Chairman
House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee

The Honorable John Hoeven, Chairman
Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry, Ranking Member
House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee

The Honorable Jeff Merkley, Ranking Member
Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee

Dear Chairman Bishop, Chairman Hoeven, Ranking Member Fortenberry, and Ranking Member Merkley:

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to support the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) by protecting mandatory funding as you consider agriculture appropriations legislation for fiscal year 2020. In addition we ask that you consider appropriating \$20 million in discretionary funding to support the program. REAP drives renewable energy and energy efficiency investments benefitting 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 16,000 farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses to produce clean energy, cut energy costs, and boost rural economic development.

Importantly, REAP investment leverages high private investment in our rural communities. REAP increases investment in rural economic development and growing new opportunities for rural small businesses and agricultural producers. Since the 2014 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 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.

Protecting mandatory REAP funding and providing additional discretionary funding in FY 2020 will help bring the benefits of the program to more farmers, ranchers, and rural small businesses. The 2018 Farm Bill includes \$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.

REAP is popular and widely supported, with requests exceeding available funds each year.

This is not surprising, given that profit margins for rural small businesses and farmers improve as they cut 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 full mandatory and \$20 million in discretionary funding we believe that REAP will continue to benefit farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses across the country while helping to 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.

Thank you for your consideration of fully funding REAP in FY2020.

Sincerely,

25x'25 Alliance
Advanced Biofuels Association
Agriculture Energy Coalition
American Biogas Council
American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy
Arkansas Advanced Energy Association
Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives
Bio Nebraska Life Sciences Association
Center for Rural Affairs
Clean Energy Economy Minnesota
Earthjustice
Environmental and Energy Study Institute
Farmers Electric Cooperative - Kalona
Fresh Energy
Georgia Corn Growers Association
Georgia Poultry Federation
Geothermal Alliance of Illinois
Geothermal Exchange Organization
Illinois Environmental Council
Indiana Farmers Union
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Iowa Environmental Council
Iowa Solar Energy Trade Association
Kentucky Interfaith Power & Light, Inc
Kentucky Poultry Federation
League of Conservation Voters

Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
Michigan Farmers Union
Mississippi Poultry Association
Missouri Farmers Union
National Association of Energy Service Companies
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
Physicians for Social Responsibility
RENEW Wisconsin
Solar Energy Industries Association
Solar United Neighbors
Solutions from the Land
Spark Northwest
Texas Poultry Federation
The Business Council for Sustainable Energy
The Poultry Federation (AR, OK and MO)
The Stella Group, Ltd.
Tennessee Poultry Association
Union of Concerned Scientists
Vote Solar
Windustry

cc: House and Senate Appropriations Committee