

April 30, 2021

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chair  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
437 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
304 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin, Chair  
Subcommittee on Agriculture & Rural  
Development  
709 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Agriculture & Rural  
Development  
338 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Leahy and Baldwin and Ranking Members Shelby and Hoeven:

On behalf of the Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE) I am writing to urge Congress to make clean energy and demand-side energy efficiency central to infrastructure improvement measures enacted in the 117th Congress, with a focus on resilience and improved public health and safety. A key aspect of rebuilding our nation's infrastructure will be assistance to America's rural farmers, ranchers and businesses, through robust funding for clean energy programs managed by the Department of Agriculture.

The BCSE is a coalition of companies and trade associations from the energy efficiency, energy storage, natural gas, renewable energy, sustainable transportation and emerging decarbonization technology sectors. It includes independent electric power producers, investor-owned utilities, public utilities, equipment manufacturers, commercial end users and service providers in energy and environmental markets. Founded in 1992, the coalition's diverse business membership is united around the revitalization of the U.S. economy and the creation of a clean, secure and reliable energy future in America.

The BCSE is pleased to have an independent small- and medium-size businesses initiative under its banner, the Clean Energy Business Network (CEBN). Together, the BCSE and CEBN represent a broad range of the clean energy economy, from Fortune 100 companies to small businesses working in all 50 states and over 350 Congressional districts. On a national basis, these industries support over 3 million U.S. jobs.

Rural clean energy programs have provided the means for agriculture-based entrepreneurs to launch initiatives to generate jobs and economic development – from wind, geothermal, hydro and solar power, to biogas and advanced biofuels, to biopower, bio-based products, renewable chemicals, and energy efficiency. For America's farmers, ranchers, and rural small businesses to continue to be leaders in the development and advancement of the clean energy economy, it is critical to adequately fund and expand Department of Agriculture clean energy programs.



*BCSE FY2022 Agriculture and Rural Development Appropriations*

BCSE members request \$150 million per year or a minimum \$300 million up front infusion for the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). The REAP program is historically oversubscribed and this infusion of funds would quickly bolster jobs, economic relief, and climate change mitigation.

Congress should include funding for a new 15% renewable energy grants “Reserve Fund” from REAP funds for underserved technologies. This reserve fund could be used to bolster technology diversification and provide economic opportunities to producers and businesses seeking to use the full suite of renewable technologies such as biogas, distributed wind power, and small hydro. Congress should also include more funding for the soon-to-be announced Renewable Energy Grants Pilot Program which is dedicated to the same goal. Congress should also increase the cost share to 50% for all REAP grants - when additional funding is provided. In addition, funding for the Rural Energy Savings Program (RESP), should be significantly expanded to assist rural areas with upgrades and resilience.

The Council welcomes the opportunity to share information from the 2021 edition of the [Sustainable Energy in America Factbook](#) which shows how clean energy growth has remained strong even in a turbulent 2020 and we look forward to working with you throughout the FY2022 budget cycle. Please feel free to reach out to Ruth McCormick at <mailto:rmccormick@bcse.org> with any questions or to arrange a time to meet.

Sincerely,

Lisa Jacobson, President  
Business Council for Sustainable Energy