BUSINESS COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AND CLEAN ENERGY BUSINESS NETWORK
PROVISIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, FARM, FOOD, AND NATIONAL SECURITY ACT OF 2026

Below is an overview of provisions submitted by members of the Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE) and Clean Energy Business Network (CEBN) for consideration in the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026. BCSE represents businesses and trade organizations representing energy efficiency, energy storage, natural gas, renewable energy, sustainable transportation, and emerging decarbonization technologies. CEBN is an independent venture of BCSE serving as the small business voice of the clean energy economy. As a diverse coalition, not all BCSE or CEBN members endorse or take a position on the issues listed below. For further information, please contact Justin Cummings at jcummings@bcse.org.

REAUTHORIZE AND REVISE THE RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR AMERICA PROGRAM (REAP)

REAP has 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 bio-based products, renewable chemicals, and energy efficiency.

For 20-plus years, REAP has successfully brought the benefits of solar, wind, energy-efficiency upgrades, grain dryers, biodigesters, and other projects to rural America. We encourage Congress to strengthen legislative language to ensure program direction is carried out as Congress intended by the Executive Branch and that these projects are inclusive of all technologies included within the scope of the program.

Recommendations

- Congress should reauthorize and revise the REAP Program. Examples of areas to be addressed include:

    - Congress should extend mandatory funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s Rural Energy for America (REAP) Program and bolster means to ensure funding for diverse energy technologies on a fuel neutral basis.
    - BCSE expresses concern about growing federal actions that restrict clean energy projects on farmland by restricting access to USDA programs for diverse energy development. BCSE respectfully urges Congress to reject policies that undermine farmers' and rural communities' ability to choose renewables as part of their operations. Farmers know their land best, and federal policy should respect their right to determine what works for their operations. BCSE urges Congress to work with USDA to ensure that federal programs and guidance do not discourage or penalize renewable energy on agricultural land. Policies should support farmer and rural community choice, protect dual-use innovation, and provide regulatory certainty – not create new barriers that limit income stability and long-term farm viability.

- Congress should expand the types of clean energy projects eligible for REAP grants to include:

    - Small-scale ammonia production (i.e., four tons/day production capacity or less) and equipment purchases, and
    - Waste Energy Recovery technologies (i.e. waste heat to power & waste pressure to power systems). The House's Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026 recognizes 'waste energy recovery' as defined under H.R.7080 as a renewable form of energy under REAP. Waste Energy Recovery technologies capture waste thermal streams or waste pressure energy produced as a byproduct of industrial and agricultural processes to generate clean, baseload electricity.

REAUTHORIZE AND FUND THE RURAL ENERGY SAVINGS PROGRAM (RESP)

The RESP provides loans to rural utilities and other companies who supply energy efficiency loans to qualified consumers to implement durable cost-effective energy efficiency measures. Eligible applicants under the RESP include current and former USDA Rural Utility Service (RUS) borrowers, subsidiaries of current or former RUS borrowers, and entities that provide retail electric service needs in rural areas. Funds may be used for the purpose of implementing energy efficiency measures to decrease energy use or costs for rural families and small businesses.

Recommendations

Congress should provide robust funding for the RESP to support rural utilities as they seek to assist farmers, ranchers, and small businesses in rural communities to be more energy-efficient and to reduce energy costs.

SUPPORT AGRIVOLTAICS RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS AT USDA

As solar continues to expand to meet accelerating electricity demand, farmland has become an attractive option for siting projects. By integrating solar with agriculture, farms across the country are demonstrating how agrivoltaics benefits their operations and local economies, including producing new sources of tax revenue to help sustain local governments. Agrivoltaics, or dual use, is defined as agriculture such as livestock grazing, crop production, or pollinator habitat that occurs under, between and around rows of solar panels.

Recommendations

Congress should properly define agrivoltaics and support research and demonstration funding at USDA.

FOSTER U.S. AGRICULTURE'S ROLE IN THE PRODUCTION OF SUSTAINABLE AVIATION FUEL AND BIOBASED PRODUCTS

Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), which can be produced from biomass and agriculture-based feedstocks, presents an opportunity to expand U.S. markets for agricultural goods, bolster our

nation's rural economy and provide a renewable, low-emission domestic energy supply for the aviation sector. The U.S. aviation sector is committed to increasing the production and use of SAF with a goal of achieving 3 billion gallons of SAF in 2030 and working closely with U.S. stakeholders across the value chain to increase SAF production. Diversifying U.S. fuel sources is particularly critical at this time when rising fuel prices and fluctuating supplies are impacting airlines and passengers alike.

Recommendations

The Farm, Food, and National Security Act should recognize the integral role American farmers play in SAF development and a growing bioeconomy in strengthening national agricultural economic viability by incorporating the following:

- The Farm To Fly Act (H.R.1719 /S. 144), introduced by Congressman Max Miller (R-OH-07) and Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS), would foster U.S. agriculture's role in the production of SAF through existing USDA programs. Specifically, the Farm to Fly Act would:
    - Affirm eligibility for SAF within current USDA Bio-Energy Programs, expanding markets for American agricultural crops through aviation bioenergy.
    - Facilitate greater collaboration on SAF among USDA mission areas and with the private sector partners.

- The bipartisan Biomanufacturing and Jobs Act (S.2654/H.R. 4832), introduced by Senator Elissa Slotkin (D-MI) and Congressman Mark Alford (R-MO-04), and the Agricultural Biorefinery Innovation and Opportunity Act (Ag BIO Act; S.2467/H.R.3253), introduced by Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Congressman Zachary Nunn (R-IA-15), would encourage federal procurement of biobased products, de-risk innovation for U.S. biomanufacturing and biorefining, support domestic renewable energy production, and strengthen biomanufacturing supply chains across the country.
    - The Biomanufacturing and Jobs Act will boost market opportunities for biobased products from agricultural feedstocks. The legislation will enhance USDA's ability to promote biobased products by improving the longstanding BioPreferred Program, encouraging federal procurement, establishing uniform terminology for product labeling and promoting American innovation to ensure America maintains its status as a leader in biomanufacturing.
    - The Ag BIO Act will strengthen USDA's Biorefinery, Renewable Chemical, and Biobased Product Manufacturing Assistance (9003) Program by expanding loan eligibility to better address the development of biofuels, renewable chemicals, and the biobased products sector.

ENACT THE GROWING RURAL AGRICULTURE INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS TO DELIVER RISING YIELDS ACT (GRAIN DRY ACT)

As farmers face lower commodity prices and higher costs, it is critical that they have another investment pathway for addressing their energy storage needs. This is why it's important to allow

farmers to have access to low-interest loans through the USDA's Farm Storage Facility Loan Program for the purposes of additional propane storage.

Recommendations

BCSE supports the Growing Rural Agriculture Infrastructure Needs to Deliver Rising Yields Act (Grain Dry Act), H.R.1302 and S.1826, being led by Congressman Brad Finstad (R-MN-01) and Senator Joni Ernst (R-IA), which was included in the House bill. The legislation specifies that funds provided under the Farm Storage Facility Loan Program may be used to construct or upgrade storage facilities for propane that is primarily used for agricultural production.

QUALIFIED RENEWABLE BIOMASS

BCSE supports legislative language included in section 12410 in the Farm, Food, and National Security Act, which recognizes the carbon neutrality of biomass.

ENHANCE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Background

- Ammonia is a critical fertilizer used throughout the United States and the world to enable the food production we have today. It can also serve as a hydrogen energy carrier that can take advantage of intermittent renewable energy and store it for later use. The current large-scale production method using fossil fuels presents cost and logistical challenges for farmers and does not allow for participation in new energy markets that can utilize ammonia.
- Large-scale ammonia production facilities have the capacity to produce several thousand metric tons of ammonia per day. This ammonia is produced using natural gas and is distributed by trucks, rail, ships, and pipelines to all corners of the country and the globe. It is typically stored in facilities that serve farming co-ops. Therefore, the cost of natural gas at any given time greatly influences the cost of ammonia. The transportation costs are significant, especially for farmers that are located far from one of the few ammonia production facilities.
- Renewable electricity (wind and solar) is routinely located on or near farmland and can provide energy to produce low-carbon hydrogen through electrolysis of water, which is the main feedstock for ammonia. However, small-scale ammonia production technology is not readily available, and the cost of ammonia produced with renewable hydrogen is still significantly more expensive than fossil ammonia.

Recommendations

Congress should create incentives to catalyze distributed ammonia production, lower the cost of ammonia when natural gas prices are high, create lower carbon-intensity fertilizer, allow farmers to participate in energy markets (e.g., sale of ammonia to utilities and energy storage services), create more predictable ammonia prices, and increase reliability of ammonia supply. Incentives should:

- Provide development funds for small-scale ammonia technology providers to enable increased product availability (must meet Buy America requirements, $500 million available over three years).
- Provide development funds for new and more efficient ammonia production technologies ($500 million over three years).

REFINE AND GROW PROGRAMS FROM THE 2018 FARM BILL TO SUPPORT RURAL JOBS AND RESILIENCE

Congress should authorize specific incentives in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQUIP) for waste management practices. These incentives would provide significant value to smaller and rural farming operations and should include manure management, composting and waste stream collection, and logistics for hub and spoke collection infrastructure. EQUIP is administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and offers financial assistance to farmers and landowners to implement conservation practices that improve soil health, water quality, and waste management.

Recommendations

- Congress should more specifically articulate the eligibility of manure and other waste stream management practices for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). The CSP provides financial incentives to farmers who actively manage and improve their agricultural lands in ways that benefit the environment. While not exclusively focused on waste management, the program may support practices that enhance waste management, water quality, nutrient recycling, and soil health.
- Congress should broaden the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) to support the establishment and production of energy-eligible byproducts/waste streams of agricultural processes – for example, by incentivizing the collection and preparation for energy purposes of agricultural residues including hemp, corn, and wheat crops. The BCAP encourages the establishment and production of dedicated energy crops for bioenergy. It provides financial assistance to farmers and landowners for growing biomass crops, such as switchgrass and miscanthus, which can be used as feedstock for biofuel and biopower production.
- Congress should specifically direct financial support to biorefineries associated with biomass gasification and anaerobic biodigesters if these can fit within the definitions of biorefineries and bioproducts in the Biorefinery Assistance Program (BAP). BAP offers loan guarantees for the development, construction, and retrofitting of commercial-scale advanced biofuel and renewable chemical production facilities.
- Congress should connect feedstocks such as native plantings, perennial grasses, and trees to incentivize/highlight biomass gasification applications in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). These plantings contribute to carbon sequestration and provide biomass feedstock for bioenergy production. The CRP has supported the establishment of these types of diverse native plantings on environmentally sensitive agricultural land.
- Congress should expand and improve the Inter-Agency Biogas Opportunities Task Force. Language was included in the conference report to the 2018 Farm Bill directing USDA, EPA, and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to establish the Biogas Opportunities Task Force, building upon the pre-existing Biogas Opportunities Working Group. The Task Force is

composed of the head of each Federal office responsible for biogas research or biogas system financing, including a representative from the above agencies as well as the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. Requests for the expansion and improvement of the Task Force include:

- Regular Task Force participation of industry stakeholders should be facilitated and extended. As stated in the 2018 bill's conference report, the Task Force will have one or more representatives of state or local governments, one or more non-governmental or industry stakeholders, and a community stakeholder. The Task Force will help drive research, collaboration, innovation, education, outreach, and deployment of anaerobic digestion technologies. These technologies are turning agricultural challenges into opportunities by converting manure and other agricultural wastes into RNG, nutrient-rich soil amendments, and fertilizers, among other things. Industry representatives should also participate in the Task Force, and Congress should provide oversight to ensure USDA implements a requirement for industry participation.
- A representative from the EPA should also be included on the Biogas Opportunities Task Force to coordinate exchange with U.S. allies, particularly European Union member states, and to better understand and share know-how on the role of RNG in international energy security and decarbonization strategies. More specifically, the EPA would facilitate exchange of information on the policy, regulatory, legal, and financial mechanisms that support the sustainable international growth of industry – particularly in developing and less-developed countries.