



News Release

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Biden-Harris Administration Invests in Clean Energy Production to Strengthen American Farms and Businesses as Part of Investing in America Agenda

More than \$2.28 Million Invested in Vermont and New Hampshire Projects through USDA Rural Energy for America Program

MONTPELIER, Vt., March 28, 2024 –Sarah Waring, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) State Director for Rural Development (RD) in Vermont and New Hampshire, today announced [\\$2,284,401 in funding for Twin State small businesses](#) through the [Rural Energy for America Program](#) (REAP).

"These projects demonstrate the strength and scale of the historical Inflation Reduction Act," said Waring. "With more than \$2.28 million invested in 11 Twin State clean-energy projects over a single round of applications, we are seeing clearly the outcome of the legislation's significant increase in REAP program funding. Whether it's renewable energy, essential weatherization or more efficient food storage and processing, REAP brings versatile funding to rural small businesses in Vermont and New Hampshire. Under the leadership of the Biden-Harris Administration, they are taking the lead by reducing costs and carbon emissions while stimulating their local economies."

The projects are part of [\\$124 million in funding across 44 states](#) for projects through REAP and the [Fertilizer Production Expansion Program](#), which USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack announced today during a visit to the University of Nebraska, Omaha. Most of the projects were made possible through President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act, the nation's largest-ever investment in combating the climate crisis. This funding advances the President's *Investing in America* agenda to grow the nation's economy from the middle out and bottom up by increasing competition in agricultural markets, lowering costs and expanding clean energy.

"Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is committed to ensuring farmers, ranchers and small businesses are directly benefitting from both a clean energy economy and a strong U.S. supply chain," Secretary Vilsack said. "The investments announced today will expand access to renewable energy systems and domestic fertilizer, all while creating good-paying jobs and saving people money that they can then invest back into their businesses and communities."

Rural Clean Energy Systems

Through the [Rural Energy for America Program](#) (REAP) program, USDA provides grants and loans to help ag producers and rural small business owners expand their use of wind, solar and other forms of clean energy and make energy efficiency improvements. These innovations help them increase their income, grow their businesses, address climate change and lower energy costs for American families. The REAP program is part of the President's [Justice40 Initiative](#), which aims to deliver 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.

These investments will cut energy costs and create jobs and new revenue streams for people in their communities. For example:

- In Springfield, Vermont, Black River Crossing will retrofit two underutilized buildings with energy-efficiency upgrades to revive their functional use and stimulate economic development in the region, courtesy of a \$214,911 REAP grant. Improvements include electric heat to replace oil combustion, and substantial weatherization of the envelope, offsetting 75 percent of historical consumption and saving roughly \$17,600 annually.
- In Candia, New Hampshire, Candia First Stop will use an \$848,347 REAP grant to install a 561.6 kW solar array and offset the power costs of its multi-retail businesses. By generating an estimated 668,100 kWh annually, this renewable energy system will save the Business more than \$133,000 each year.

Since the start of the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA has invested more than \$1.8 billion through REAP in over 6,000 renewable energy and energy efficiency improvements that will help rural business owners' lower energy costs, generate new income, and strengthen their resiliency of operations.

USDA continues to accept REAP applications and will hold funding competitions quarterly through Sept. 30, 2024. The funding includes a dedicated portion for underutilized renewable energy technologies. For additional information on application deadlines and submission details, see [page 19239 of the March 31 Federal Register](#).

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities, create jobs and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural, tribal and high-poverty areas. Visit the [Rural Data Gateway](#) to learn how and where these investments are impacting rural America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov. To subscribe to USDA Rural Development updates, visit the [GovDelivery Subscriber Page](#).

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