



News Release

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USDA Invests in Rural Communities to Lower Energy Costs in Twin States as Part of Investing in America Agenda

Nearly \$2.7 Million in Small Business Funding Invested through Rural Energy for America Program

Montpelier, Vt., Oct. 3, 2024 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) State Director for Rural Development (RD), Sarah Waring, announced today that the agency is investing \$2,698,024 million in grants through the [Rural Energy for America Program \(REAP\)](#) to support six small businesses in Vermont and New Hampshire. The funding is made possible by President Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act, the nation’s largest-ever investment in combating the climate crisis, and is part of a larger initiative that will award \$104 million in loans and grants to more than 300 clean energy projects in 34 states.

“Under the historic, bi-partisan Inflation Reduction Act, the Rural Energy for America Program has doubled its economic impact on small businesses throughout the Twin-States and across the country,” said Waring. “Today’s announcement highlights once again the incredible, life-changing benefits that Vermont and New Hampshire businesses are enjoying under the Biden-Harris Administration. A 168 percent increase in REAP applications over the last two years is proof that resilient, resourceful rural economies are being built from the inside out by the folks who make, sell and distribute the goods that make our lives better.”

Since the start of the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA has invested more than \$2.3 billion through REAP in 7,923 renewable energy and energy efficiency improvements. REAP enables agricultural producers and rural small business owners to expand their use of wind, solar, geothermal and small hydropower energy and make energy efficiency improvements. These innovations help them increase their income, grow their businesses and address climate change while lowering energy costs for American families.

Examples of the awards being announced today:

- In East Ryegate, Vt., the Ryegate Biomass Power Plant will use a \$1 million REAP grant to install a Waste Heat Recovery module, which will capture organic waste heat from wood biomass to generate new energy. This project will produce an additional 315,466 mmBtus annually, valued at \$1,892,676.
- Britton Lumber Company in Bath, NH, will use \$581,995 in REAP funding to install a 300HP biomass boiler. The wood gasification steam-boiler system will generate

approximately 95 percent of the site's thermal energy needs from wood residues produced on-site as lumber byproducts. Annual savings are estimated to exceed \$225,000.

- In Fairlee, Vt., Wings Market & Deli is installing a roof-mounted solar array to generate 117,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity, courtesy of a \$142,866 REAP grant. The energy produced is valued at more than \$19,000 annually, and is estimated to offset 33 percent of the company's historic energy consumption.

USDA continues to accept REAP applications and has set aside a portion of the program funds to support underutilized renewable energy technologies, like wind and geothermal power. For additional information, contact USDA at (802) 828-6070 or BP.VT.NH.Inquiry@usda.gov.

A [complete list of all REAP projects](#) is available online.

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to expand economic opportunities, create jobs and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans in rural areas. REAP is a part of the President's [Justice40 Initiative](#) which sets a goal that 40% of the benefits from certain federal investments go to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution. USDA Rural Development 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 subscribe to USDA Rural Development updates, visit the [GovDelivery Subscriber Page](#).

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate-smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

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