



# NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development  
200 Fourth Street SW • Federal Building, Room 210 • Huron, SD 57350

Phone: (605) 352-1100 or 1-800-670-6553 • Fax: (605) 352-1146 • TDD: (605) 352-1147 • Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/sd>

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Tammi Schone – (605) 352-1102

## **USDA Invites Applications for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Projects**

WASHINGTON, January 20, 2012 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that USDA is seeking applications to provide assistance to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to complete a variety of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Funding is available from USDA's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill).

"Renewable energy development presents an enormous economic opportunity for rural America," said Vilsack. "This funding will assist rural farmers, ranchers and business owners to build renewable energy projects, providing opportunities for new technologies, create green jobs and help America become more energy self-sufficient."

The Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) is designed to help agricultural producers and rural small businesses reduce energy costs and consumption and help meet the Nation's critical energy needs. For 2012, USDA has approximately \$25.4 million budget authority available to fund REAP activities, which will support at least \$12.5 million in grant and approximately \$48.5 million in guaranteed loan program level awards. USDA is accepting the following applications:

- renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement grant applications and combination grant and guaranteed loan applications until March 30, 2012;
- renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement guaranteed loan only applications on a continuous basis up to June 29, 2012;
- renewable energy system feasibility study applications through March 30, 2012; and
- energy audits and renewable energy development assistance applications through February 21, 2012.

More information on how to apply for funding is available in the January 20, 2012 [Federal Register](#), pages 2948 through 2954.

This funding is an example of the many ways that USDA is helping revitalize rural economies to create opportunities for growth and prosperity, support innovative technologies, identify new markets for agricultural producers, and better utilize our nation's natural resources.

The Obama Administration is working to promote domestic production of renewable energy to create jobs, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, combat global warming, and build stronger rural economy. Today, Americans import just over half of our transportation fuels – down from 60 percent when President Obama took office – but we can do more to meet the President's

---

Committed to the future of rural communities.

"USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender."

To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800)795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

goal of reducing our net fuel imports by one-third by 2025. At Secretary Vilsack's [direction](#), USDA is working to develop the national biofuels industry producing energy from non-food sources in every region of the country. USDA is conducting and encouraging research into innovative new energy technologies and processes, helping companies build biorefineries – including the first ever commercial-scale cellulosic ethanol facilities – and supporting farmers, ranchers, and businesses taking risks to pursue new opportunities in biofuels. Along with Federal partners, USDA is establishing an aviation biofuels economy, and has expedited rules and efforts to promote production and commercialization of biofuels.

USDA's Biorefinery Assistance Program was authorized by Congress under the 2008 Farm Bill. It provides loan guarantees to capitalize on the growing opportunities in renewable energy provided by advanced biofuels. The Program is designed to assist with the commercial deployment of production technologies to produce advanced biofuels, and thereby increase the energy independence of the United States; promote resource conservation, public health, and the environment; diversify markets for agricultural and forestry products and agriculture waste material; create jobs and enhance the economic development of the rural economy.

To read more about the Administration's renewable energy accomplishments, [click here](#).

USDA, through its Rural Development mission area, administers and manages housing, business and community infrastructure and facility programs through a national network of state and local offices. Rural Development has an active portfolio of more than \$155 billion in affordable loans and loan guarantees. These programs are designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers, and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA Rural Development's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

- USDA -