

# President's Perspective

In conversations across the energy industry, one word stood out this year: uncertainty.

Shifts in power ushered in debates over the future of federal tax incentives, energy innovation funding, regulations, international trade, and more. It has never been a more critical time for businesses—especially smaller companies and startups—to have timely policy insights and direct access to decisionmakers.

That's where the <u>Clean Energy Business Network</u> (CEBN) comes in. We are a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization with a network of more than 8,700 small business and community leaders across all 50 states, 400+ congressional districts, and a broad range of energy technologies. Our mission is to demystify and democratize access to federal policies and funding resources for these business leaders, while elevating their voices before lawmakers.

We help stakeholders navigate the ups and downs of federal policies and funding, guiding them through periods of policy uncertainty and conversely, positioning them to seize new opportunities when resources are abundant.

This year, as the policy landscape shifted rapidly, engagement across our network reached record levels. More than 1,120 advocates took action through sign-on letters, email campaigns, fly-ins, and media outreach.

Together, we helped limit rollbacks of energy tax credits to the extent possible and showcased the on-the-ground benefits of federal energy investments. Several of our priorities related to small business research programs and federal grant management partially advanced in Congress and are poised for further progress in 2026. Meanwhile, U.S. energy markets remained strong, with a record \$338 billion in clean energy finance and growing global leadership in emerging sectors such as clean hydrogen, carbon capture, and electric vehicles.

Looking ahead, we will continue advocating for our outstanding policy priorities and helping businesses navigate federal programs and funding opportunities. Throughout this work, we will reinforce the importance of an all-of-the-above energy approach—leveraging the full suite of technologies needed to meet rising demand and maintain U.S. competitiveness.

Whatever 2026 brings, one thing is certain: CEBN remains committed to keeping you informed and ensuring your voice is heard.

Lynn Abramson

President, Clean Energy Business Network

# Clean Energy Business Network AT A GLANCE

Founded in 2009 by <u>The Pew Charitable Trusts</u>, CEBN spun out in 2017 to become an independent small business initiative of the <u>Business Council for Sustainable Energy</u>.

# **OUR REACH**

# 8,700+

Business and community leaders

#### 7,700+

Small business leaders

#### 900+

Nonprofit/entrepreneur support organizations

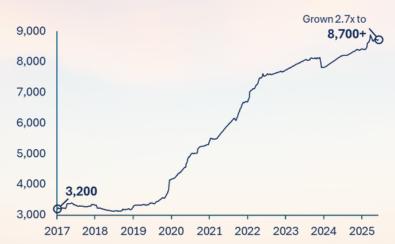
#### 300+

State & local government

#### 300+

Academia & researchers

#### **Network Growth Since 2017**



# 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

1,120+

Policy advocates

600+

**Event attendees** 

100+

Congressional meetings

26

Press features



# Bringing Small Business Voices to Washington

Small businesses bring localized, authentic, and often unheard voices to the table, but many would lack the resources or platforms to navigate or engage in federal policy without CEBN's support. Throughout 2025, CEBN served as a critical outlet to help small businesses navigate and speak up about federal energy tax credits, funding for energy innovation, and more. Together with our parent organization, BCSE, we engaged a broad spectrum of the energy economy—ranging from Fortune 500 companies and trade associations to small companies and community organizations across the country.

# **Energy Tax Incentives**

As Congress negotiated a major tax package—the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA)—CEBN and BCSE kept business leaders informed and helped them convey the impacts of the legislation on their industries.

#### **Advocacy**

- 75 meetings with congressional offices, featuring 49 small business leaders
- 486 signatures on business letters in March and April
- 538 emails to congressional offices including 97 individually customized on priorities
- **5 CEBN/BCSE policy** letters and 9 partner/ coalition letters

#### Stakeholder Education

- Tax Package Resource
   Center providing live
   updates
- 413 webinar attendees across 2 CEBN/BCSE events and 3 partner presentations

#### **Communications**

24 press features in national and state outlets



The final legislation, signed into law by President Trump on July 4, 2025, was a step backwards for many energy sectors. However, it spared several key energy credits (e.g., geothermal, hydro, storage) from rapid elimination and provided a one-year runway for wind and solar to start construction in order to claim safe harbor. The bill also included a full and permanent restoration of the Sec. 174 R&D credit, with a small business carveout providing retroactive relief through 2022.

# Small Businesses Advocate for Policy Certainty

From March through July 2025, the Clean Energy Business Network (CEBN) organized a series of advocacy meetings that brought 49 small business leaders from across the country into 75 meetings with congressional offices. These discussions focused on the importance of protecting energy tax incentives and federal investments in energy innovation and modernization. The fly-in and dial-in meetings were part of CEBN's broader effort to amplify small business voices in the federal policy conversation and ensure federal policy supports the continued growth of America's energy economy.

During the meetings, participants spoke directly with Members of Congress and their staff to share personal examples of how federal energy incentives and programs have strengthened their businesses. Following these discussions, CEBN and attendees provided additional information to offices on key topics including energy tax credits, Section 174 R&D tax deduction, and impoundment/spending cuts.

Whether operating a solar installation company in rural Texas, a geothermal startup in Colorado, or a manufacturing plant in Michigan, these small business leaders validate the need for stable federal support to serve their customers and grow their companies.











Small business leaders and CEBN staff meet with congressional offices on the need for stable tax policy and R&D funding. First row: Jerod Smeenk (Frontline Bioenergy), Jim Kurtz (RER Energy Group), Tom Thompson (Greentech Renewables), Lynn Abramson and Nadia Gallimore (CEBN), Uche Isiugo (Infraenergy), Scott Packard (Smartville). Second row: Robert DeSaro (Energy Research Company), Nadia Gallimore, Uche Isiugo, Andy Barnes (CEBN), Cara Martin (OTS R&D)

# SBIR/STTR Reauthorization

CEBN urged Congress to reauthorize the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)/ Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs ahead of their expiration on September 30, 2025 to keep fueling our nation's innovation engine.

#### **Advocacy**

- > 400+ signatures on business letter
- **650+ emails** to congressional offices
- **9 meetings** with congressional offices

#### Stakeholder Education

- SBIR Action Center with opportunities to engage
- > 56 webinar attendees

#### **Communications**

Business OpEds/ media outreach in development

The House passed a clean one-year extension (H.R. 5100) but negotiations in the Senate stalled due to an impasse over how to curb repeat awardees and foreign influence, and the programs lapsed. CEBN is working with partner organizations to identify potential compromises and paths forward and will continue to push for reauthorization.









# **Urge Congress to Extend SBIR/STTR Programs**



nator Joni Ernst U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship 260 Russell Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20002

Ranking Member U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship 255 Dirksen Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20002

September 30, 2025

Dear Chair Ernst and Ranking Member Markey:

On behalf of the undersigned businesses and organizations, we use Congress to swiftly extend it Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs given a lapse on October 1. A short-term extension would provide the time needed for continued biparisan negotiations on reauthorization while ensuring that these vital programs do not experience a damaging interruption.

For more than four decades, SBIR and STIR have been among the most effective federal programs for driving innovation, strengthening U.S. competitiveness, and fostering high-quality job creation. These programs fund breakthrough technologies developed by small businesses across every state, erving the mission needs of federal agencies while catalyzing private-sector growth. Allowing a apse—even a brief one—would risk undermining research pipelines, disrupt partnerships, and nd a message of uncertainty to the very companies driving U.S. innovation

e recognize that important negotations are ongoing between bemocratic and nepopulous an tembers of Congress over how best to reauthorize these programs. While these differing prop ay not align on every legislative detail, they each share a common interest in avoiding a lapsa-nsuring that any long-term reauthorization preserves what has made SBIR and STTR successf

- Provide long-term certainty for the programs, ideally permanent reauthorization, so small
- businesses can plan with confidence.
   Ensure sufficient allocation levels that reflect the programs' proven return on taxpayer
- . Improve commercialization pathways, such as strengthening and expanding Phase III
- opportunities and agency support to help bridge the "valley of death."

   Support efforts to strengthen recruitment and support of new applicants and simplify
- Prevent agencies from placing unreasonable limits on indirect cost rates



### SBIR Congressional Updates

Expired on September 30, 2025

- · Last reauthorized September 2022 Main Changes:
- Foreign Risk Management & Due Diligence
   Change to Performance Standards (Phase I to II and II to III)
- · New Reauthorization Bills
  - INNOVATE Act (H.R.4777) Republicans Bil
  - . SBIR/STTR Reauthorization Act of 2025 (H.R.3169/S.1573) Democrats Bill
- . H.R.5100 Clean One Year Exter
- . Very little overlap between the bills
- . The "six corners" have talks have not continued during the shutdown new ises" being considered by both sides



# Congress Advances Legislation to End Government Shutdown – What's in the Bill?

November 12, 2025 | Lynn Abramson







On November 12, federal lawmakers enacted a FY2025 continuing resolution [CR]—legislation to continue funding the federal government at existing spending levels through the end of January. The Senate initially passed the bill on a 60-40 tiebreaker vote, and then the House voted 222-209 to send it to President Trump's desk for signature. The CR provides more time for Congress to finalize outstanding funding negotiations for the remainder of FY2026, which runs from Oct. 1, 2025 through Sep. 30, 2026.



# Federal Funding for Energy Programs

CEBN engaged small businesses across multiple technology sectors to highlight the impacts of federal funding for energy innovation and modernization. Priorities included supporting robust funding for the Department of Energy (DOE) in FY2026 appropriations, pushing back on efforts to cancel or freeze existing funding awards, and opposing stringent new indirect cost caps imposed by DOE and other agencies.

### **Advocacy**

- ➤ **165 signatures** on <u>FY26</u> appropriations letter
- ➤ 110 signatures on indirect cost caps letter and 52 case studies
- ➤ **520 emails** to congressional offices on frozen grants and contracts
- 3 partner letters on project cancellations in key states

#### Stakeholder Education

- Newsletter and website content on government shutdown and FY26 appropriations
- Outreach/updates to impacted grantees affected by indirect cost caps and project cancellations

#### **Communications**

Facilitated <u>media</u>
 <u>coverage</u> of businesses
 impacted by project
 cancellations

In its draft proposal for FY2026 appropriations, Congress has included language putting guardrails around project cancellations and directing DOE to reinstate previously negotiated indirect cost rates. Lawmakers are anticipated to vote on this proposal in early January.

# **Other Policy Areas**

CEBN engaged in advocacy efforts on additional policy areas not referenced above, including convening information-gathering meetings with business leaders and key policy makers on permitting reform. Together with our parent organization (BCSE) and the Alliance to Save Energy, we helped mobilize 180+ business leaders to push for doubling global energy efficiency targets at COP 30 in Brazil. We also supported the Heat is Power Association's efforts to ensure that waste heat to power technologies received full recognition in the tax code.



I've been a huge beneficiary of the work of CEBN, from your webinars to advocacy training. Thank you so much for all that you do!

Zora Chung, Co-Founder & CFO ReJoule (Signal Hill, CA)



Thank you for your advocacy for small, clean energy businesses like us! This is critical work!

Jason Cotrell, CEOSperra (Boulder, CO)



# Demystifying Government Programs

CEBN serves as a "first stop" point of entry, working to make government and privatesector resources more accessible for small energy businesses and other stakeholders. We demystify federal grant programs and curate sources of support and technical assistance from across the cleantech ecosystem.

### **U.S. Cleantech Funding Database**

CEBN's <u>Cleantech Funding Database</u> streamlines the process for small businesses, nonprofits/community organizations, academia, and state/local governments to find funding. Since 2018, it has aggregated information on federal and state grants, prizes, incubators and accelerators, fellowships, technical assistance opportunities, and other resources into one easy-to-navigate repository. Users can also subscribe to weekly or monthly email updates containing new opportunities, customizable to their interests.

#### In 2025, the database:

- Featured **\$5.9 billion** in funding across **130 opportunities**.
- ➤ Achieved all-time reach of 3,150+ active users.
- Attracted 362 email subscribers.

### **Cleantech Ecosystem Resources List**



CEBN also continued to update our <u>Cleantech</u> <u>Ecosystem Resources List</u>, a quick-access, searchable repository of organizations and programs that provide support services and expertise commonly requested by cleantech businesses and community organizations. Organizations providing these support services can also request inclusion in the list.

### **Updates on Energy Policies and Markets**

The <u>CEBN Weekly</u> is our most essential tool for reaching our network of small clean energy businesses, nonprofits, and other clean energy advocates, offering the latest updates from Washington and across the country. This newsletter provides succinct, simplified updates on federal, state, and international policy; events; funding opportunities; and industry news. In 2025, our newsletter:

In 2025, the newsletter:

- ➤ Reached an average weekly audience of **6,083 contacts**.
- Achieved an average open rate of 30%.
- Went out 49 out of 52 weeks of the year.
- > Surpassed more than **417 newsletters** published since 2017.







We also offer **two bi-monthly email series** focusing on innovation/R&D in cleantech and reducing barriers to entry in the energy economy:

- Energy Innovation Update
- Inclusive Energy Economy Update

Finally, we regularly produce blog series and events demystifying federal policies and programs in accessible language. We continued to add new educational content throughout 2025 unpacking energy tax credits, suspension or cancelation of federal grants, SBIR/STTR programs, and other developments.



# Showcasing the Clean Energy Economy

This year, CEBN and BCSE collaborated to release <u>the State of U.S. Energy</u>—a series of factsheets detailing how investments in a broad portfolio of energy solutions are helping states meet skyrocketing demand growth and reduce energy costs for consumers. The series leverages multiple data sets to provide a current view of the benefits of energy investment in 14 states, with geographies ranging from Kansas to New York and statistics ranging from job growth to rural land lease payments.

The factsheets also feature local case studies demonstrating how energy businesses are delivering for these states now – improving energy efficiency, maintaining grid reliability, and breaking new ground on generation projects.

Louisiana

Michigan

Minnesota

Massachusetts

- KansasNew Jersey
  - New York
    - North Carolina
    - Pennsylvania
    - South Carolina

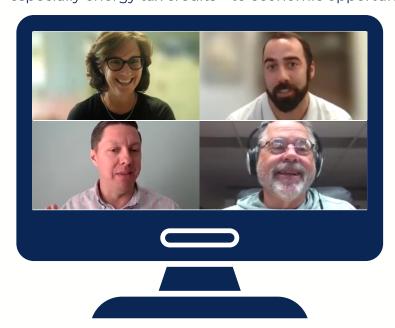
220,035 energy
workers statewide sependiture invested in energy and manufacturing
Natural gas +
renewables = 35%
of Tennessee's power

**Energy Solutions to Meet** 

**Growth in Tennessee** 

- <u>Tennessee</u>
- Texas
- Utah
- West Virginia

CEBN and BCSE also collaborated on press conferences connecting federal policies—especially energy tax credits—to economic opportunity on the ground in key states.



Small business leaders share their stories in various CEBN/BCSE press conferences. First row: Sarah Hill-Nelson (Bowersock Mills & Power Company, KS), Bob DeLullo (Greentech Renewables, PA). Second row: Richard Lovegreen (Greentech Renewables, SC), Chip Pickering (Pickering Associates, WV)

In particular, CEBN brought the perspectives of small business leaders into these discussions to offer authentic voices and compelling narratives.

Virtual press conferences were held for media in Kansas, Ohio, North Pennsylvania, Carolina, South Carolina, and West Virginia, with strong participation from reporters in each of these states. These events contributed to CEBN and BCSE securing two dozen highlighting press hits the potential impacts of changes to the energy tax credits as Congress debated the tax package.

### Powering Forward into 2026

CEBN remains committed to serving as the voice of small businesses on Capitol Hill and beyond. We will continue to build and sustain relationships with network members across the country, helping small business leaders navigate policy developments and access federal funding opportunities.

In 2026, our key areas of focus will include:

- ▶ Ensuring robust FY27 funding for energy programs.
- ➤ Finalizing SBIR/STTR reauthorization.
- ▶ Reauthorizing the Energy Act of 2020 and other bipartisan infrastructure programs.
- ▶ Tracking Treasury Department guidance on OBBBA implementation.
- Keeping businesses informed about permitting reform developments.
- > Promoting stronger congressional oversight in implementing funding decisions.
- ▶ Advancing public-private financing models.
- > Reducing barriers to entry for federal grants and contracts.

Thank you to all our network members and partners for your continued engagement and collaboration. We look forward to working together in 2026.

Visit **www.cebn.org** to join our community of business leaders, partners, and changemakers across the country.

Together, we can build a more affordable, reliable, and accessible clean energy economy.





Lynn Abramson, Andy Barnes, and Nadia Gallimore

Special thanks to our former team member, **Allie Judge**, for her contributions to CEBN over the last four years, including designing the template for our Annual Reports.

**Front:** Nadia Gallimore (CEBN), Uche Isiugo (Infraenergy), and Scott Packard (Smartville) outside the U.S. Capitol



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