



The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Majority Leader  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Senate Minority Leader  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Pat Roberts  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,  
and Forestry  
Russell 328A Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,  
and Forestry  
133 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

June 11, 2018

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Chairman Roberts, and Ranking Member Stabenow:

As companies and organizations deploying clean and efficient energy technologies across the United States, we are writing to urge Congress to reauthorize and maintain stable mandatory funding for energy title programs in the Farm Bill reauthorization. It is essential that a healthy, robust bipartisan energy title continue as part of new comprehensive agriculture legislation. We also recommend improvements to make these programs even more valuable in impacting a broader array of technologies.

Clean energy industries represent a tremendous opportunity for rural communities to attract new industries and taxpayer revenue. Clean and efficient energy technologies can also provide consumers access to a wider range of technologies and keep costs low. As documented in the 2018 [Sustainable Energy in America Factbook](#) (produced by the Business Council for Sustainable Energy and Bloomberg New Energy Finance), communities across the United States are benefitting from the deployment of cleaner, more efficient sources of energy. According to the *Factbook*, in 2017:

- Consumers devoted a smaller share of their spending towards electricity than at any time ever recorded, and the total share of household expenses dedicated to energy costs also hovered near an all-time low;
- Electricity off-takers secured renewable energy at ever cheaper price points, and in several regions of the country, renewable energy power purchase agreements (PPAs) were the most cost-effective option for electricity;
- The economy grew without a corresponding uptick in energy use, continuing a long-term trend of increasing energy productivity;
- Renewable energy and natural gas accounted for half of electricity generation in the U.S.;

- Clean energy industries attracted \$57 billion in investment to the U.S. in 2017 and provided 3 million jobs in 2016.

These trends hold true in rural communities across America, which have seen quantifiable and substantial gains in economic development, jobs, manufacturing, and environmental quality and improved consumer access to renewable energy, bio-based products, and energy efficiency.

Farm Bill energy title programs provide 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 biopower, bio-based products, renewable chemicals, and energy efficiency. The energy title has enabled farmers, ranchers, and rural small businesses to become more self-sufficient and bring high-value products to market. And yet, these programs account for less than one tenth of 1 percent of Farm Bill spending and provide outsized benefits, representing a modest, cost-effective investment in rural communities.

The Clean Energy Business Network’s profile series, [\*Faces Behind the Facts\*](#), tells the stories of business leaders working across the industries discussed in the *Factbook*—several of whom have completed projects with Farm Bill energy title programs. Some of the undersigned members on this letter have also shared specifics of projects conducted using these programs. Collectively, we can attest to the importance and deep local benefits of Farm Bill programs working to provide clean, reliable, and affordable energy solutions to rural communities across America.

For America’s farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses to continue to be leaders in the development and the advancement of the clean energy economy, it is critical the next Farm Bill reauthorize programs such as the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) and other energy title programs. Additionally, Congress should expand funding to REAP and consider adding technologies such as fuel cells and energy storage. We urge you to support a robust suite of programs with strong mandatory funding in the upcoming Farm Bill.

Sincerely,

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Washington, DC

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