



May 3, 2018

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
Russell 328A Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable K. Michael Conaway
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin C. Peterson
Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Committee Chairmen Roberts and Conaway and Ranking Members Stabenow and Peterson:

On behalf of the Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE) I am writing to respectfully request that Congress reauthorize and maintain stable mandatory funding for energy title programs in the next farm bill reauthorization. It is essential that a healthy, robust bipartisan energy title continue as part of new comprehensive agriculture legislation. The Council also recommends improvements to make these programs even more valuable in impacting a broader array of technologies.

BCSE is a coalition of companies and trade associations from the energy efficiency, natural gas and renewable energy sectors. It includes independent electric power producers, investor-owned utilities, public power, manufacturers, commercial end users and service providers in energy and environmental markets. Founded in 1992, the coalition's diverse business membership is united around the continued revitalization of the economy and the creation of a secure and reliable energy future in America.

Renewable energy, energy efficiency and natural gas deliver more jobs, increased economic growth, greater energy productivity and fewer emissions for the United States. Statistics from the 2018 edition of the *Sustainable Energy in America Factbook* recently released by BCSE and Bloomberg New Energy Finance document these trends:

- Consumers devoted a smaller share of their spending in 2017 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;
- Renewable energy generation now accounts for 18 percent of U.S. electricity generation, nearly on par with the nation's nuclear fleet;
- Natural gas accounts for another 32 percent of electricity generation, making it the number one source of U.S. electric power;
- American economic growth is picking up steam without a parallel jump in energy consumption, and the United States remains competitive globally for energy-intensive industries thanks to low industrial power prices;

- The renewable energy, energy efficiency and natural gas sectors employed approximately 3 million Americans in 2016;
- A new tool from the Clean Energy Business Network, BCSE’s partner organization of 3,000 business leaders from small to medium-sized companies across the U.S., illustrates the “Faces Behind the Facts” and tells the story of how companies have benefitted from federal programs to launch their business ventures and provide solutions that work for American consumers and taxpayers.

These trends hold true across the United States, including in areas that have benefited from the farm bill energy title programs which have assisted rural America to develop clean, renewable energy, bio-based products, and make energy efficiency investments. Rural economic development, jobs, manufacturing, and environmental quality have all seen quantifiable and substantial gains.

This has occurred as the result of a modest, cost-effective investment. In fact, energy title programs account for less than one tenth of 1 percent of farm bill spending and yet provide outsized benefits. 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.

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 update programs like REAP to add fuel cells and energy storage as eligible technologies. We urge you to support a robust suite of programs with strong mandatory funding in the upcoming Farm Bill. We look forward to working with you and your staff on these programs and welcome the opportunity to meet with your staff to discuss the Council’s views. Please contact Ruth McCormick in the Council’s offices at rmccormick@bcse.org with your staff’s availability to meet.

Sincerely,



Lisa Jacobson
President, Business Council for Sustainable Energy

CC: Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry