



April 29, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven, Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies
338 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Shelby and Hoeven and Ranking Members Leahy and Merkley:

The Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE) is writing to request funding for rural energy programs funded through the Fiscal Year 2020 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill. A chart containing funding requests is attached.

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.

As Congress moves forward with appropriations legislation for Fiscal Year 2020, we urge you to do the following:

- 1) Enact a budget agreement to address budget caps for domestic programs;
- 2) Continue robust funding for rural energy programs;
- 3) Provide clear direction to the Department of Agriculture in legislative language or report language.

The 2019 edition of the *Sustainable Energy in America Factbook* recently released by BCSE and Bloomberg New Energy Finance document trends that show that renewable energy, energy efficiency and natural gas deliver more jobs, increased economic growth, greater energy productivity and fewer emissions for the United States. These trends hold true across the United States, including rural areas that have benefited from the farm bill energy programs. These programs have assisted rural America to develop clean, renewable energy, and bio-based products, and to make energy efficiency investments. Rural economic development, jobs, manufacturing, and environmental quality have all seen quantifiable and substantial gains.

Rural energy 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.

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 to adequately fund and expand the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) and other rural energy programs. We 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

Cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Appropriations
Attachment