



# News Release

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## **USDA Invests \$121 Million in Critical Infrastructure to Combat Climate Change Across Rural America**

### *15 Projects in New Hampshire and Vermont Funded through Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) Grants*

**WASHINGTON, August 24, 2022** – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Deputy Secretary Dr. Jewel Bronaugh today announced USDA is investing [\\$121 million in critical infrastructure](#) to combat climate change across rural America. The funding will include grants for 15 energy-efficiency and renewable-energy projects throughout New Hampshire and Vermont.

“Rural America is on the front lines of climate change, and our communities deserve investments that will strengthen all of our resilience,” Bronaugh said. “The Biden-Harris Administration has created a roadmap for how we can tackle the climate crisis and expand access to renewable energy infrastructure. The investments we’re announcing today and those that will be made possible by historic funding from President Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act will strengthen our energy security, create good-paying jobs and save Americans money on their energy costs.”

The funding will help people in 49 states, Guam and Puerto Rico. It reflects the many ways USDA Rural Development helps rural residents, businesses and communities address economic development, infrastructure and social service needs.

“With USDA’s help, Vermont and New Hampshire farmers, agricultural producers and businesspeople are adapting to a changing climate by reducing both their costs and carbon footprint,” said Sarah Waring, State Director for USDA Rural Development in Vermont and New Hampshire. “These essential projects sustain the health of our rural communities, underscoring the Biden-Harris Administration’s commitment to strengthening energy security. This funding and the historic Inflation Reduction Act will continue to save Americans money, create jobs and increase access to renewable energy infrastructure.”

These investments reflect the goals of President Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act, which addresses immediate economic needs and includes the largest ever federal investment in clean energy for the future. For example, the Act includes \$14 billion in funding for USDA programs that support the expansion of biofuels and help rural businesses and electric cooperatives transition to renewable energy and zero-emission systems.

## Background:

Bronaugh highlighted a total of 415 investments that USDA is making through three programs specifically designed to help people and businesses in rural areas. These programs are [Community Facilities Disaster Grants](#), [Rural Energy for America Program Renewable Energy Systems & Energy Efficiency Improvement Guaranteed Loans & Grants](#), and [Rural Energy for America Program Energy Audits and Renewable Energy Development Grants](#).

The investments will help state and local government entities, nonprofit organizations, and federally recognized Tribes construct, renovate or purchase and install equipment for essential community facilities for public use in rural areas. They also will help agricultural producers and rural small businesses purchase and install renewable energy systems as well as make energy efficiency improvements.

Some examples include:

- Wilkins Sawmill in Milford, New Hampshire, will use a \$7,604 REAP grant to retrofit its facilities with LED lighting and install electrical control devices to improve and stabilize electricity use from equipment, saving an estimated \$3,900 annually
- In Townshend, Vermont, Big Picture Farm will replace 98 percent of its energy consumption through a 32.7kW roof-mounted solar array to save \$7,000/year, courtesy of a \$18,039 REAP grant, while producing its award-winning farmstead confections and cheeses.
- The Community College System of New Hampshire will use a \$91,304 grant through the Energy Audit and Renewable Energy Development Assistance program to support NH Rural Renewables, which benefits 44 rural small businesses and agricultural producers with solar photovoltaic and wood thermal energy, and other energy-efficiency technologies.
- Staff at the VT NH Veterinary Clinic, a 70-year-old practice in E. Dummerston, Vermont, received a \$16,378 REAP grant to install a 20.7kW solar array, replacing 76 percent of the clinic's energy usage and saving \$4,200 annually.

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities, create jobs and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural, Tribal and high-poverty areas. For more information, visit [www.rd.usda.gov](http://www.rd.usda.gov). If you'd like to subscribe to USDA Rural Development updates, visit our [GovDelivery subscriber page](#).

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