

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 8, 2024

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chairwoman  
House Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Murray, Vice Chair Collins, Chairwoman Granger, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you begin the process of reconciling the Senate and House versions of the Fiscal Year 2024 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bills, we urge you to protect funding and improvements made to the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) in the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

Since its inception in 2008, REAP has provided grants and loans that have helped more than 21,000 farms and rural businesses nationwide access affordable, renewable energy and energy efficiency systems. In 2022 alone, REAP supported nearly 2,500 different projects across the country to provide enough combined estimated energy savings and energy generation to power more than 250,000 homes per year. Without assistance from the REAP program, fewer farms and rural small businesses would be able to invest in money-saving clean energy technologies.

However, REAP is historically oversubscribed, and there has been broad sweeping interest in expanding not only the program's funding but its ability to support the deployment of innovative clean technologies farmers and rural small businesses want. In response, Congress enacted improvements to REAP through the IRA. The IRA allocated approximately \$2.2 billion in additional funding to the program through 2031. It also made improvements to the program such as increasing the share of project costs that can be covered by a REAP grant and establishing a set-aside for "underutilized technologies."

In June, the House Appropriations Committee proposed to cut \$500 million of this REAP funding, a nearly 25 percent reduction (Sec. 722 in H.R. 4368). Additionally, the Committee included a provision that would prohibit IRA funds from being used for REAP grants (Sec. 775 in H.R. 4368). REAP grants represent the backbone of the program and are a vital tool for ensuring that America's farmers and rural small business owners can access money-saving clean energy technologies.

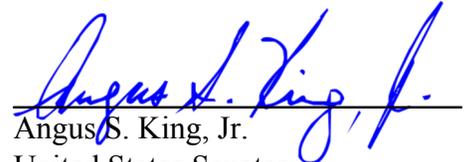
In addition to diversifying our energy supply with renewable energy resources and making energy efficiency investments, REAP helps communities support good paying jobs, lower producer costs, advance "Buy American" manufacturing, and improve environmental quality. The robust funding included in the IRA is critical to simultaneously improve the financial health of rural communities and protect our climate.

For these reasons, we urge you to keep Sections 722 and 775 from H.R. 4368 out of the conferenced Fiscal Year 2024 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

Sincerely,



Tina Smith  
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



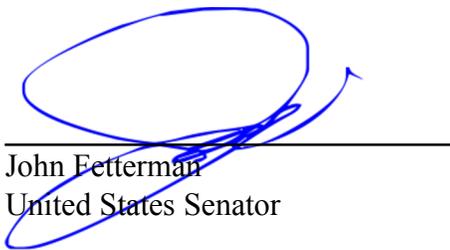
Peter Welch  
United States Senator



Ben Ray Luján  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



John Fetterman  
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator

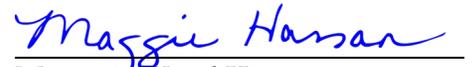


Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock  
United States Senator

  
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Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator

  
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Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator

  
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Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator

  
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Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

  
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Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

  
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Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator

  
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Jon Ossoff  
United States Senator