



U.S. Department of Agriculture

USDA Announces Another Round of Historic Investments to Increase Access to Clean, Affordable Energy Across the Country

Investments in Rural Electric Cooperatives Will Lower Costs and Support Jobs in Rural Communities

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced awards for more than \$4.37 billion in clean energy investments.

RAMSEY, Minn., Dec. 19, 2024 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced awards for more than \$4.37 billion in clean energy investments through the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Empowering Rural America (New ERA) Program. Rural electric cooperatives will use the funding to support thousands of jobs, lower electricity costs for businesses and families and reduce climate pollution by millions of tons each year.

New ERA was made possible by President Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act, the largest investment in rural electrification since President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the Rural Electrification Act into law in 1936. New ERA program funding is available to member-owned rural electric cooperatives, which have been the backbone of America’s rural power delivery for nearly a century.

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Rural Utilities Service Administrator Andy Berke highlighted the new investments at the Ramsey, Minnesota, headquarters of **Connexus Energy**, the state’s largest electric cooperative. Connexus will use nearly \$170 million in New ERA grant funding to procure over 282 megawatts of renewable hydro, solar and wind energy. The cooperative also will purchase 20 megawatts of battery energy storage. These projects will lower costs for its members in rural Minnesota, support nearly 400 jobs and reduce climate pollution by more than 1.1 million tons each year.

Connexus is one of 10 rural electric cooperatives receiving funding in today’s announcement. USDA is awarding \$4.37 billion in loans and grants to cooperatives based in Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Texas. The investments will support at least 5,000 jobs and reduce climate pollution by over 11 million tons each year. For example:

- **CORE Electric Cooperative** will use a \$225 million investment to procure 550 megawatts of wind and solar energy, and 100 megawatts of battery energy storage for rural communities in Colorado. The project is expected to support short- and long-term jobs, stabilize costs for members and help meet the state's net-zero climate pollution goals.
- **Georgia Transmission Corporation** will use an up to \$325 million investment for several projects, including new transmission lines and upgrades to existing transmission assets in approximately 20 rural communities across Georgia.
- **Nebraska Electric G&T** will use a \$200 million investment to procure 725 megawatts of wind and solar energy in Butler, Burt and Custer counties. The project will supply enough electricity to power 170,000 homes each year, reduce climate pollution by over 2.2 million tons per year and support as many as 425 jobs.
- **Oglethorpe Power Corporation** will use a \$331.5 million investment to refinance outstanding loans for the retired Hal B. Wansley coal plant. The refinancing will result in average annual savings of \$7.7 million in expenses from 2025 to 2044, which will be passed to the 38 member cooperatives it serves.
- **San Miguel Electric Cooperative, Inc.** will use a more than \$1.4 billion investment to procure 600 megawatts of clean, renewable energy through solar voltaic panels and a battery energy storage system to power 47 counties across rural South Texas. The project will reduce climate pollution by more than 1.8 million tons each year, equivalent to removing 446,000 cars from the road each year, and support as many as 600 jobs.
- **Seminole Electric Cooperative, Inc.** will use a more than \$1.3 billion investment to procure 700 megawatts of energy resources through a combination of utility-scale solar and battery energy storage projects across rural portions of Florida. This project will support roughly 3,400 jobs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than 3.5 million tons annually, which is the equivalent of removing 740,000 cars from the road each year.
- **Trico Electric Cooperative Inc.** will use a more than \$43 million investment to procure 80 megawatts of solar energy and 80 megawatts of battery energy storage in rural Arizona. The project will supply enough electricity to power nearly 11,000 homes each year, reduce climate pollution by over 132,000 tons each year and support as many as 256 jobs.
- **United Power** will use a nearly \$262 million investment to offset the cost of its transition to a clean energy portfolio that will provide more than 760 megawatts of

renewable energy resources in rural Colorado. United Power's green portfolio currently represents over 300 megawatts of solar, hydropower and wind energy, including one project providing tax benefits and workforce opportunities in a disadvantaged county. The New ERA investment will help the cooperative reduce climate pollution by over 2.1 million tons each year.

- **Yampa Valley Electric Association** will use a nearly \$50 million investment to procure up to 150 megawatts of solar energy and 75 megawatts of battery energy storage for northwestern Colorado and southwestern Wyoming. The project will support disadvantaged communities, promote jobs skills through an expanded scholarship program and reduce climate pollution by 255,000 tons each year.

In addition to the 10 cooperatives receiving loans and grants today, USDA has selected six other cooperatives to move forward in the process to receive New ERA funding. These include:

- Grand Valley Rural Power Lines Inc., Mountain Parks Electric Inc. and San Miguel Power Association Inc. in Colorado,
- 1803 Electric Cooperative Inc. in Louisiana,
- Pacific Northwest Generation Cooperative in Oregon, and
- Inland Power and Light Company in Washington and Idaho.

Additional details on all funding recipients and selectees are available on the [New ERA website](#).

Including today's announcements, USDA has awarded funding to 15 cooperatives as part of the New ERA program to benefit rural electric cooperatives and their members. This funding represents almost \$9 billion in New ERA-financed grants and loans. These projects will support good-paying jobs, lower energy costs for rural Americans, significantly reduce pollution and enhance the resiliency of the nation's electric grid. One in five rural Americans stands to benefit from these clean energy investments.

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Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$7.3 Billion in Clean Energy Investments from the Investing in America Agenda, Largest Investment in Rural Electrification Since the New Deal

16 Selected Rural Electric Cooperatives for New ERA Program, Including First Award to Dairyland that will Result in Lower Energy Costs and Good-Paying Jobs for Rural Americans

WESTBY, WI, Sept. 5, 2024 – During a visit to Wisconsin today, President Joe Biden and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack will announce more than \$7.3 billion in financing for rural electric cooperatives to build clean energy for rural communities across the country through the [Empowering Rural America](#) (New ERA) program

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The first round of selectees and the states they serve are as follows:

- Allegheny Electric Cooperative Inc., Pennsylvania and New Jersey
- Arizona Electric Power Cooperative, Inc., Arizona, California, Nevada, and New Mexico
- Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota
- Buckeye Power, Inc., Ohio
- CORE Electric Cooperative, Colorado
- Dairyland Power Cooperative, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, and Minnesota
- East Kentucky Power Cooperative, Kentucky
- Golden Valley Electric Association, Alaska
- Great River Energy, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin
- Hoosier Energy, Indiana and Michigan
- Minnkota Power Cooperative, North Dakota and Minnesota
- San Miguel Electric Cooperative Inc., Texas
- Seminole Electric Cooperative, Inc., Florida
- Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc., Colorado, New Mexico, Nebraska, and Wyoming

- United Power, Colorado
- Wolverine Power Supply Cooperative, Michigan

[More information about these selections can be found here.](#)

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USDA expects to continue making [New ERA](#) and [Powering Affordable Clean Energy](#) (PACE) program awards in the coming months.