

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 17, 2019

The Honorable John Hoeven  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and  
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and  
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Hoeven and Ranking Member Merkley:

We write to express our support for robust funding of energy programs in the Fiscal Year 2020 Departments of Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Act. Your prompt attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) energy programs authorized in the recently enacted bipartisan *Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018* will help improve our nation's energy security and economic development. In addition to diversifying our energy supply with renewable energy sources, these programs help rural communities produce good paying jobs, advance manufacturing, and address our changing environment.

Every state in the United States utilizes USDA's energy programs. These programs include support for wind, solar, advanced biofuels, biogas, biopower, bioproducts, renewable chemicals, hydroelectric, hydrogen, energy storage, and energy efficiency projects in our communities. At a time of low farm incomes and uncertainty with foreign markets, investing in impactful cost-sharing programs improves the bottom line for rural communities while securing a more sustainable future.

USDA's energy programs are cross-cutting, cost-effective, and revitalize the rural economy. These include the Biobased Markets Program ("BioPreferred"), the Biorefinery Assistance Program, the Biomass Crop Assistance Program, the Biomass Research & Development Initiative, the Biodiesel Fuel Education Program, the Carbon Utilization and Biogas Education Program, the Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels Program, and the Rural Energy For America Program (REAP). Because of its popularity, REAP is typically oversubscribed, demonstrating the need for robust support.

The development of the FY 2020 appropriations bill comes at a critical time as the USDA proceeds with the implementation of programmatic changes authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill. This bipartisan legislation expanded the scope of these programs to reflect new and innovative technologies while addressing pressing agricultural and societal needs, such as carbon utilization and energy storage. We believe these programs represent economically and technically feasible


approaches to meeting our nation's economic development, energy security and environmental policy objectives.

Again, please support and provide robust funding for USDA energy programs. Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

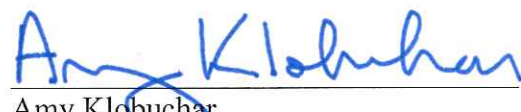
  
Tina Smith  
United States Senator

  
Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator


  
Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator

  
Sheldon Whitehouse  
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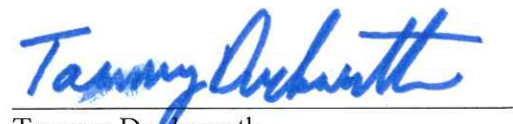
  
Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

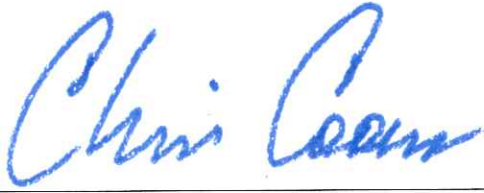
  
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United States Senator

  
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Charles E. Grassley  
United States Senator

  
Ron Wyden  
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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



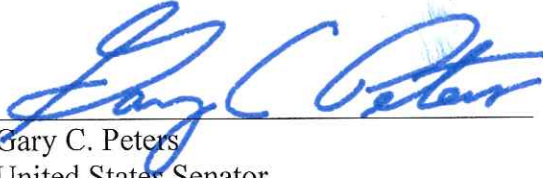
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Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



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Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator



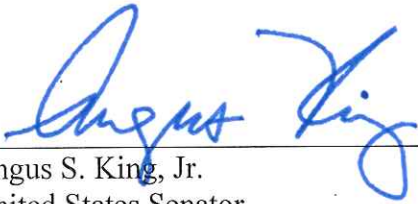
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Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



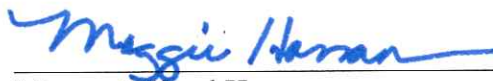
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Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



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Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



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Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator