

§ 8107. Rural Energy for America Program**(a) Establishment**

The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Energy, shall establish a Rural Energy for America Program to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy development for agricultural producers and rural small businesses through—

- (1) grants for energy audits and renewable energy development assistance; and
- (2) financial assistance for energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy systems.

(b) Energy audits and renewable energy development assistance**(1) In general**

The Secretary shall make competitive grants to eligible entities to provide assistance to agricultural producers and rural small businesses—

- (A) to become more energy efficient; and
- (B) to use renewable energy technologies and resources.

(2) Eligible entities

An eligible entity under this subsection is—

- (A) a unit of State, tribal, or local government;

- (B) a land-grant college or university or other institution of higher education;

- (C) a rural electric cooperative or public power entity; and

- (D) any other similar entity, as determined by the Secretary.

(3) Selection criteria

In reviewing applications of eligible entities to receive grants under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider—

- (A) the ability and expertise of the eligible entity in providing professional energy audits and renewable energy assessments;

- (B) the geographic scope of the program proposed by the eligible entity in relation to the identified need;

- (C) the number of agricultural producers and rural small businesses to be assisted by the program;

- (D) the potential of the proposed program to produce energy savings and environmental benefits;

- (E) the plan of the eligible entity for performing outreach and providing information and assistance to agricultural producers and rural small businesses on the benefits of energy efficiency and renewable energy development; and

- (F) the ability of the eligible entity to leverage other sources of funding.

(4) Use of grant funds

A recipient of a grant under paragraph (1) shall use the grant funds to assist agricultural producers and rural small businesses by—

- (A) conducting and promoting energy audits; and

- (B) providing recommendations and information on how—

- (i) to improve the energy efficiency of the operations of the agricultural producers and rural small businesses; and

- (ii) to use renewable energy technologies and resources in the operations.

(5) Limitation

Grant recipients may not use more than 5 percent of a grant for administrative expenses.

(6) Cost sharing

A recipient of a grant under paragraph (1) that conducts an energy audit for an agricultural producer or rural small business under paragraph (4) shall require that, as a condition of the energy audit, the agricultural producer or rural small business pay at least 25 percent of the cost of the energy audit, which shall be retained by the eligible entity for the cost of the energy audit.

(c) Financial assistance for energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy systems**(1) In general**

In addition to any similar authority, the Secretary shall provide loan guarantees and grants to agricultural producers and rural small businesses—

- (A) to purchase renewable energy systems, including systems that may be used to produce and sell electricity; and

- (B) to make energy efficiency improvements.

(2) Award considerations

In determining the amount of a loan guarantee or grant provided under this section, the Secretary shall take into consideration, as applicable—

- (A) the type of renewable energy system to be purchased;

- (B) the estimated quantity of energy to be generated by the renewable energy system;

- (C) the expected environmental benefits of the renewable energy system;

- (D) the quantity of energy savings expected to be derived from the activity, as demonstrated by an energy audit;

- (E) the estimated period of time for the energy savings generated by the activity to equal the cost of the activity;

- (F) the expected energy efficiency of the renewable energy system; and

- (G) other appropriate factors.

(3) Feasibility studies**(A) In general**

The Secretary may provide assistance in the form of grants to an agricultural producer or rural small business to conduct a feasibility study for a project for which assistance may be provided under this subsection.

(B) Limitation

The Secretary shall use not more than 10 percent of the funds made available to carry out this subsection to provide assistance described in subparagraph (A).

(C) Avoidance of duplicative assistance

An entity shall be ineligible to receive assistance to carry out a feasibility study for a project under this paragraph if the entity has received other Federal or State assistance for a feasibility study for the project.

(4) Limits**(A) Grants**

The amount of a grant under this subsection shall not exceed 25 percent of the cost of the activity carried out using funds from the grant.

(B) Maximum amount of loan guarantees

The amount of a loan guaranteed under this subsection shall not exceed \$25,000,000.

(C) Maximum amount of combined grant and loan guarantee

The combined amount of a grant and loan guaranteed under this subsection shall not exceed 75 percent of the cost of the activity funded under this subsection.

(d) Outreach

The Secretary shall ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, that adequate outreach relating to this section is being conducted at the State and local levels.

(e) Lower-cost activities**(1) Limitation on use of funds**

Except as provided in paragraph (2), the Secretary shall use not less than 20 percent of the funds made available under subsection (g) to provide grants of \$20,000 or less.

(2) Exception

Effective beginning on June 30 of each fiscal year, paragraph (1) shall not apply to funds made available under subsection (g) for the fiscal year.

(f) Report

Not later than 4 years after the date of enactment of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the implementation of this section, including the outcomes achieved by projects funded under this section.

(g) Funding**(1) Mandatory funding**

Of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation, the Secretary shall use to carry out this section, to remain available until expended—

- (A) \$55,000,000 for fiscal year 2009;
- (B) \$60,000,000 for fiscal year 2010;
- (C) \$70,000,000 for fiscal year 2011; and
- (D) \$70,000,000 for fiscal year 2012.

(2) Audit and technical assistance funding**(A) In general**

Subject to subparagraph (B), of the funds made available for each fiscal year under paragraph (1), 4 percent shall be available to carry out subsection (b).

(B) Other use

Funds not obligated under subparagraph (A) by April 1 of each fiscal year to carry out subsection (b) shall become available to carry out subsection (c).

(3) Discretionary funding

In addition to any other funds made available to carry out this section, there is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this sec-

tion \$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2009 through 2012.

(Pub. L. 107-171, title IX, §9007, as added Pub. L. 110-234, title IX, §9001(a), May 22, 2008, 122 Stat. 1315, and Pub. L. 110-246, §4(a), title IX, §9001(a), June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1664, 2077.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The date of enactment of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, referred to in subsec. (f), is the date of enactment of Pub. L. 110-246, which was approved June 18, 2008.

CODIFICATION

Pub. L. 110-234 and Pub. L. 110-246 enacted identical sections. Pub. L. 110-234 was repealed by section 4(a) of Pub. L. 110-246.

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 8107, Pub. L. 107-171, title IX, §9007, May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 483, related to application of hydrogen and fuel cell technologies, prior to the general amendment of this chapter by Pub. L. 110-246.

§ 8108. Biomass research and development**(a) Definitions**

In this section:

(1) Biobased product

The term “biobased product” means—

(A) an industrial product (including chemicals, materials, and polymers) produced from biomass; or

(B) a commercial or industrial product (including animal feed and electric power) derived in connection with the conversion of biomass to fuel.

(2) Demonstration

The term “demonstration” means demonstration of technology in a pilot plant or semi-works scale facility, including a plant or facility located on a farm.

(3) Initiative

The term “Initiative” means the Biomass Research and Development Initiative established under subsection (e).

(b) Cooperation and coordination in biomass research and development**(1) In general**

The Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Energy shall coordinate policies and procedures that promote research and development regarding the production of biofuels and biobased products.

(2) Points of contact

To coordinate research and development programs and activities relating to biofuels and biobased products that are carried out by their respective departments—

(A) the Secretary of Agriculture shall designate, as the point of contact for the Department of Agriculture, an officer of the Department of Agriculture appointed by the President to a position in the Department before the date of the designation, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate; and

(B) the Secretary of Energy shall designate, as the point of contact for the De-