

Vermont's Congressional Delegation – Senator Patrick Leahy (D), Senator Bernie Sanders (I) and Congressman Peter Welch (D) – reported Tuesday that 18 Vermont farms and rural businesses will share \$3,750,930 in grants and loans to support energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy projects. The loans and grants are being made through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP).

The Vermont projects include nearly \$2 million in grants and loans for the installation of agricultural methane production, electrical generation facilities at two farms in Addison County and a loan of \$1.5 million to support the Addison Solar Farm now under construction on Route 7 in Vergennes. Ten Vermont maple producers will receive grants of up to \$14,000 to improve energy efficiency, reducing the fuel needed to run their evaporators and sharpen the productivity of their sugaring operations. Other projects include additional solar voltaic installations and energy efficiency improvements on dairy and poultry farms. The full list of the 18 Vermont projects is available online at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/supportdocuments/REAPAWARDSTonsagerNov2010.pdf>

The high-level interest and activity in Vermont on renewable energy and energy efficiency is reflected in the fact that Vermont ranks sixth among the 50 states in the total number of projects funded.

Leahy, the most senior member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, said, "Renewable energy is a natural for rural areas like Vermont. This is tangible support that will directly boost the bottom line for many farms and small businesses in Vermont, while cutting our dependence on fossil fuels and generating new construction and manufacturing jobs. These are home-grown Vermont initiatives that hew closely to our state's economic and energy future."

Sanders said, "There is little doubt in my mind that in the years to come the energy mix in this state will be very different than it is today – with a far greater reliance on energy efficiency and sustainable energy. This federal support will be a major step forward in moving our state toward a greener economy."

Welch, a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, said, "Vermont's agricultural community has long recognized the importance of investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy. These grants and loans will help reduce farmers' energy costs while supporting their

efforts to harvest another key crop: sustainable energy."

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack said, "These loans and grants will generate and save energy for the nation's farmers and rural small businesses for decades to come."