



ENVIRONMENTAL LAW  
& POLICY CENTER

# Creating Climate Change Solutions

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## ENVIRONMENTAL LAW & POLICY CENTER

Illinois

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**The Environmental Law & Policy Center is the Midwest's largest environmental legal and policy advocacy organization.**

**We believe we can  
*both* protect our natural heritage *and* advance our economy.**

[www.ELPC.org](http://www.ELPC.org)

[www.RuralSolarStories.org](http://www.RuralSolarStories.org)

# *ELPC's Farm Energy Program*

*Led on REAP for 20 years.*

- Work with Congress, USDA, allies

## **Policy solutions**

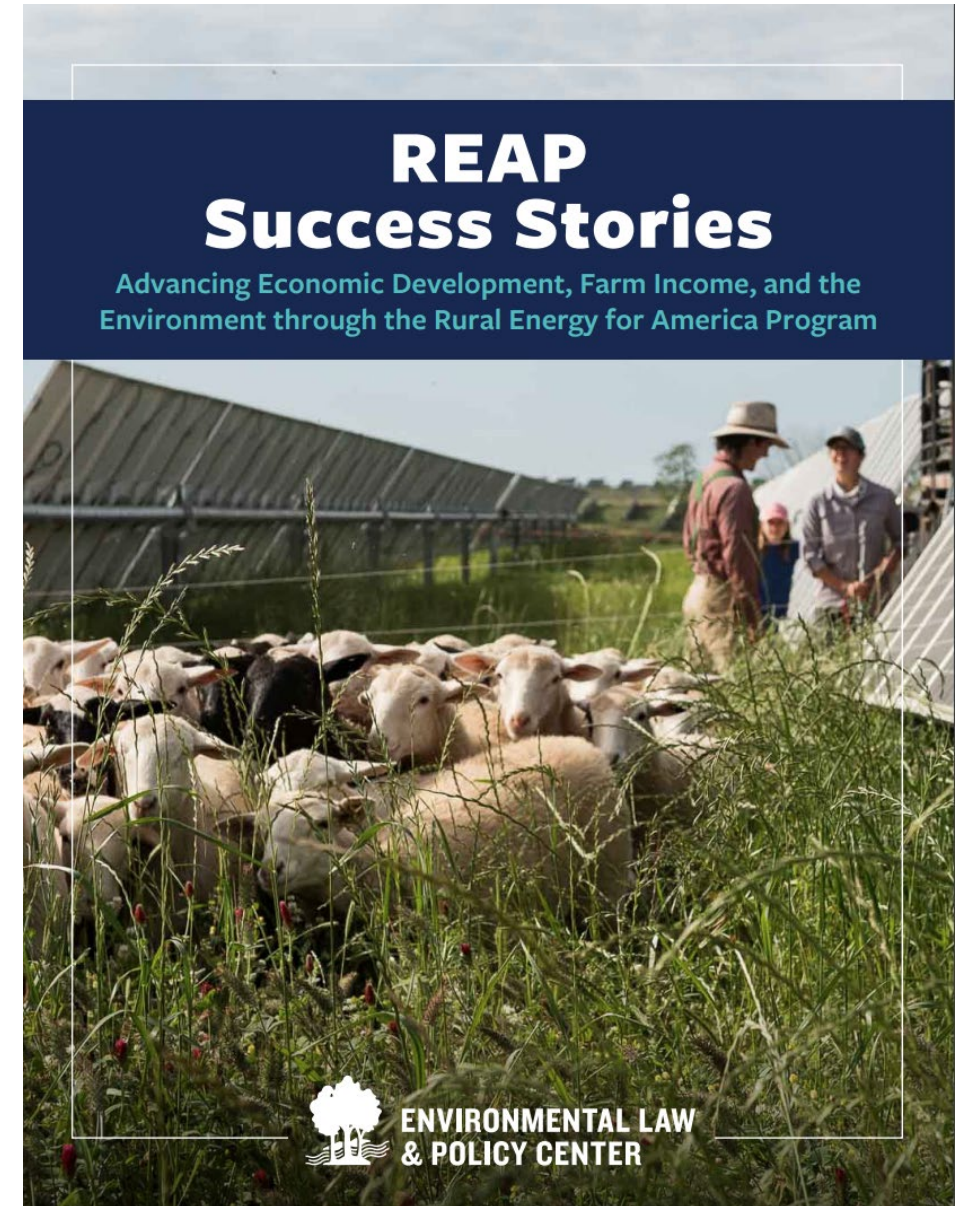
- Strategy / advice

## **Education**

- RuralSolarStories.org
- Webinars and workshops

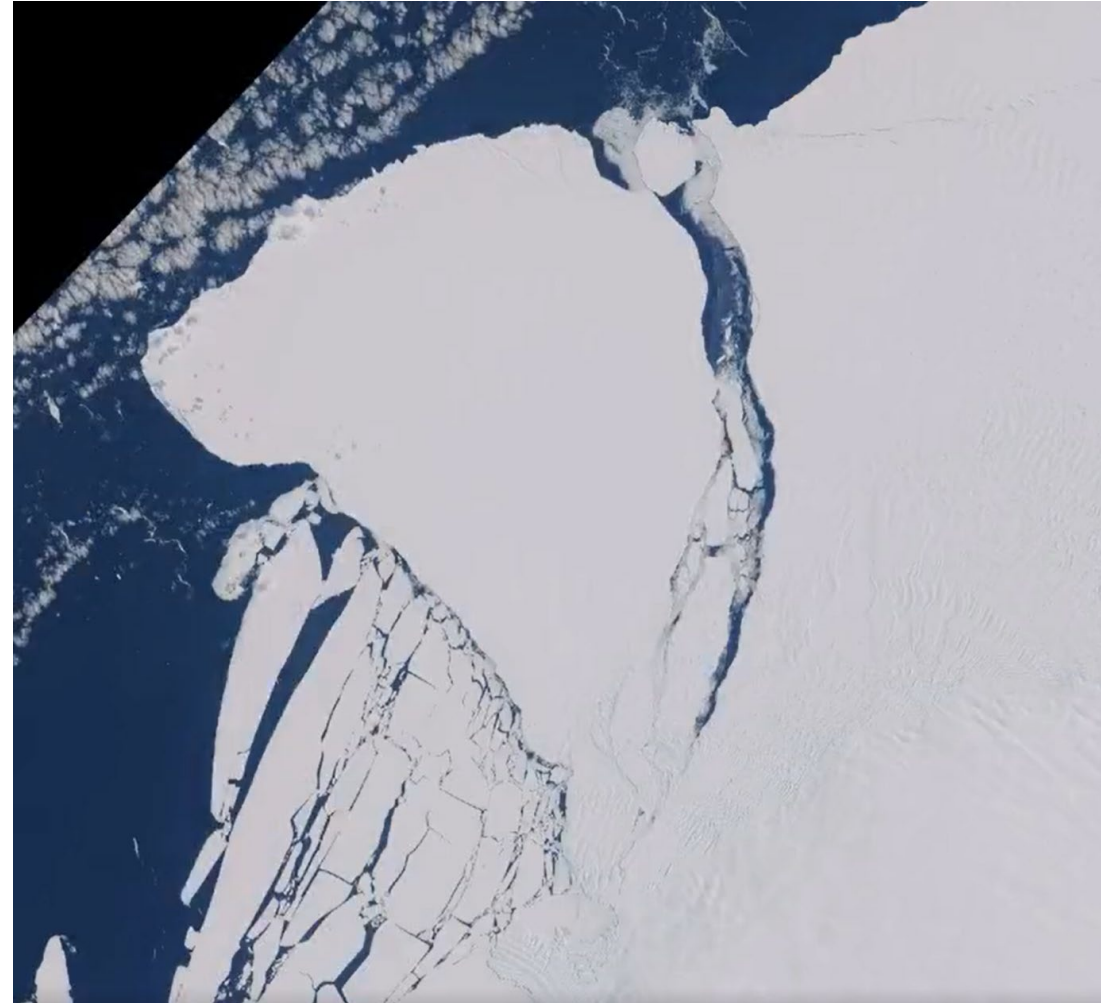
*New Report!*

**[elpc.org/REAPSuccess](http://elpc.org/REAPSuccess)**



# Time to Act on the Climate Crisis

- Climate change is expensive and risky
- We have solutions
- Rural America is key
- We need to act quickly and at great scale



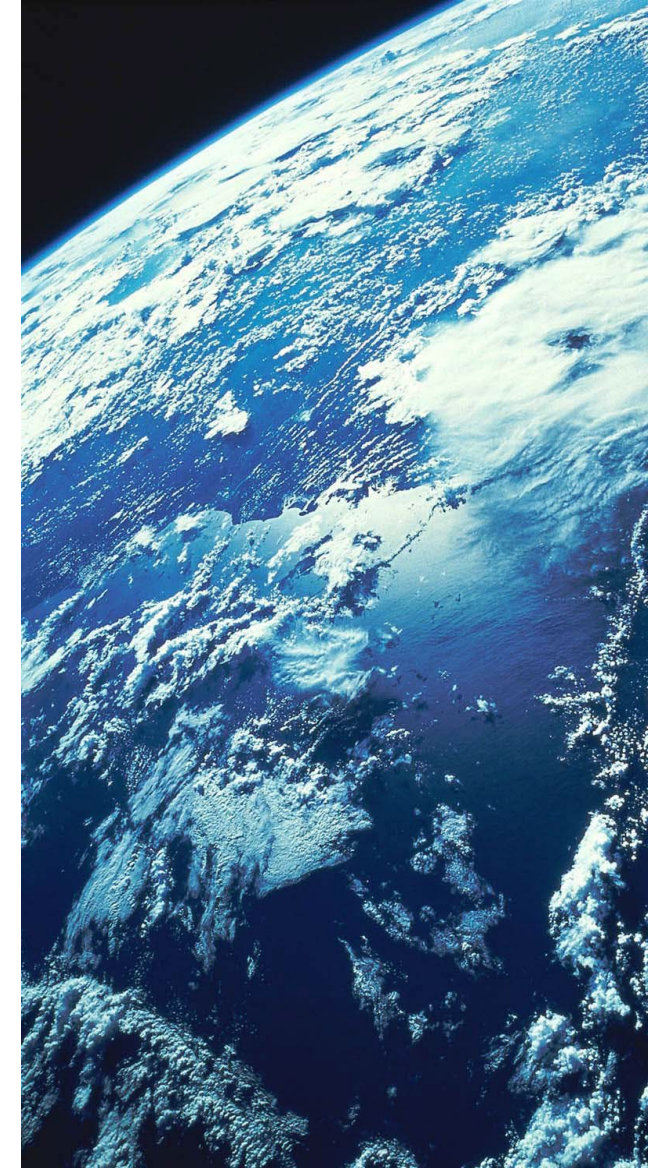


## Climate Disruption and Agriculture

### *Agriculture affected:*

- Season creep
- Changes in Precipitation Patterns
- Flooding
- More Droughts and Heat Waves
- Markets want low carbon footprint

***We have solutions!***



# Rural Energy for America Program - REAP

## *20 years of service to America*

- Over 22,000 awards for energy efficiency and renewable energy
- Has reached every state
- Serves every agricultural sector
- Advances rural economic development with environmental progress



## REAP Features

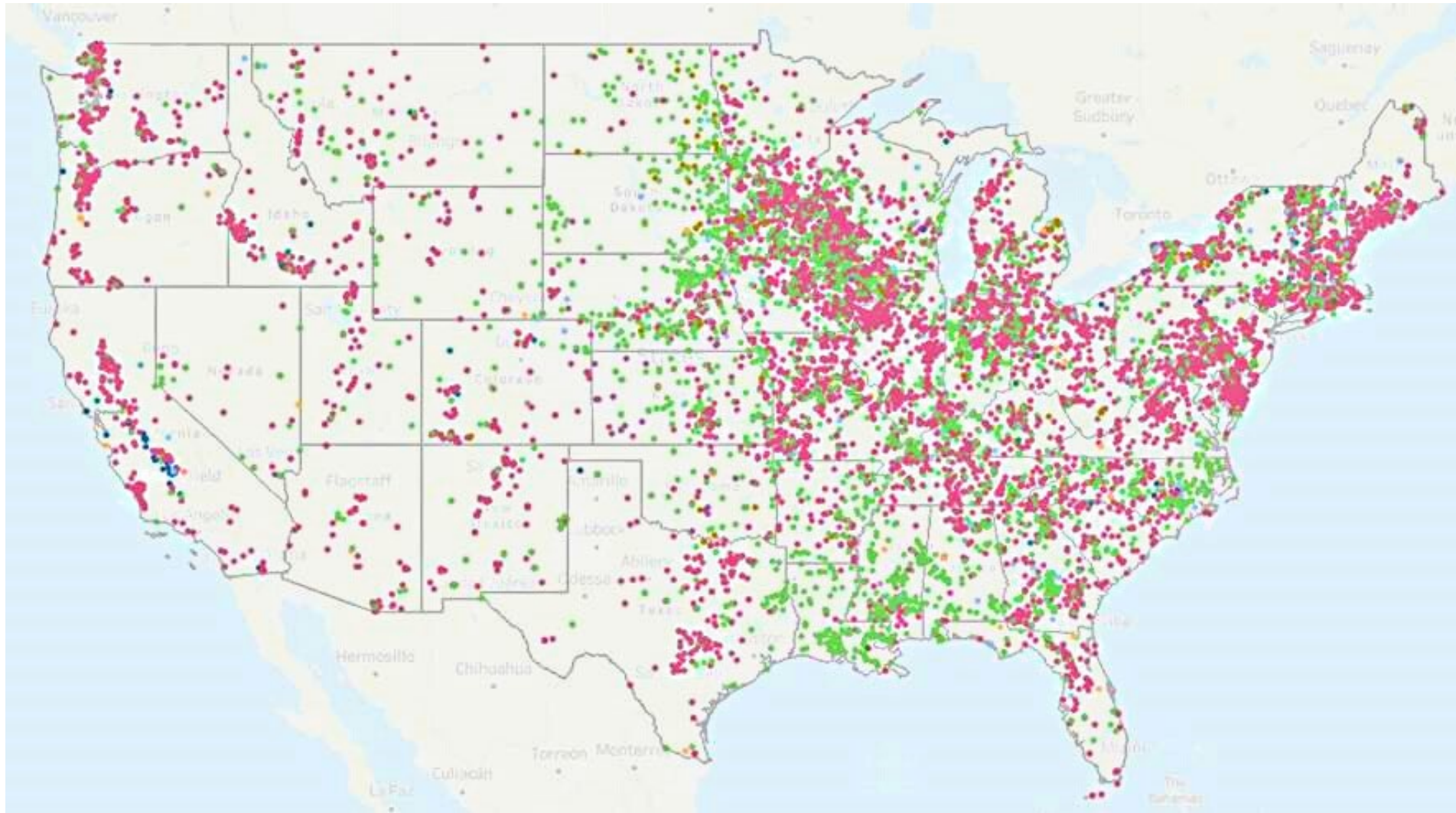
- REAP created in 2002 Farm Bill
- Renewed three times
- Over 22,000 projects in 20 years
- Grants and Loan Guarantees
- 25% cost share
- Competitive award, based on proposal scores
- Historically oversubscribed





# REAP Serves Every State

## 2014-2022 Grants





# White Oak Pastures – Solar & Energy Efficiency

Bluffton, Georgia

- Regenerative agriculture success story
- Grant for 2010 solar array
- 2019 REAP grant of \$19,250 for efficient freezer doors
  - Increased picking hours, 10-12 hours (up from 8)
- Will expand sheep grazing, 3,800 acres of solar farms
  - Helps new farmers build a stake.
- Clay County one of poorest counties in America
  - White Oaks is largest private employer, 180 employees
  - Pay over \$100,000 weekly into local economy



## Smiley Farms – Energy Efficiency

Greensburg, Indiana

- 2018 REAP grant of \$16,250
  - Covered 25% of the cost for 46 variable frequency drives (VFDs)
  - VFDs allow motors to run at slower speeds to match output needed for job
    - Less wear and tear
- Expect to realize \$6,500 per year in savings
  - Reducing yearly energy use by 66,612 kWh or 52%, enough to power 6 homes

## Wildtype Native Plant Nursery – Solar

Mason, Michigan

- REAP grant for 35 kW solar array
  - “Dealmaker”
- Utility bill decreased from \$550 to \$100 per month
- Short 7-year payback period for panels lasting 30 years
- Agriculture energy crisis
  - Panels provide stable energy costs and savings





## Thomas Wind – Wind Energy

Hadley, Minnesota

- 2019 REAP grant of \$16,000 for 120 kW wind turbine
- Provides \$8,000-10,000 per year
  - Increased income and offsets electricity costs
- Unused land and missed opportunities
  - Need programs like REAP and stronger net metering for more people
  - Turbines being wasted and scrapped





## Bowman & Landes Turkey Farm – Solar

Bluffton, Georgia

- Keeping their carbon footprint low with energy efficiency and renewable energy
  - 2 previous solar arrays
  - LED lighting and electrification
- 2020 REAP grant of \$59,900 for additional 200 kW solar array
- Combined projects cover 50% of farms yearly operating needs
  - Savings of \$25,000 per year
- Strong supporters of agrivoltaics and solar

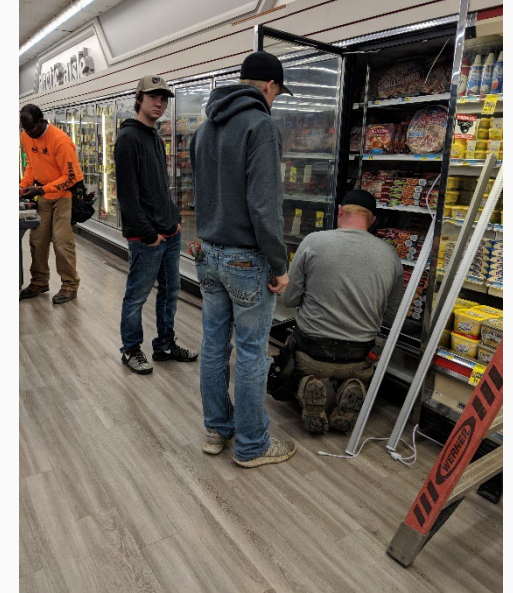


# Fiesta Foods – Energy Efficiency

Beresford, South Dakota

- Grant for energy efficient refrigeration units
  - REAP covered 25% of cost, back into the business.
  - Allowed for more complete overhaul
- Savings of ~\$1,300 per month
  - Lower repair and food costs
  - Food lasts longer and is cleaner behind doors
- Increased sales every year since renovation

**“It’s a must to keep . . . [REAP] . . . because once you start losing your small business in these small towns, you don’t have a lot of town left”**

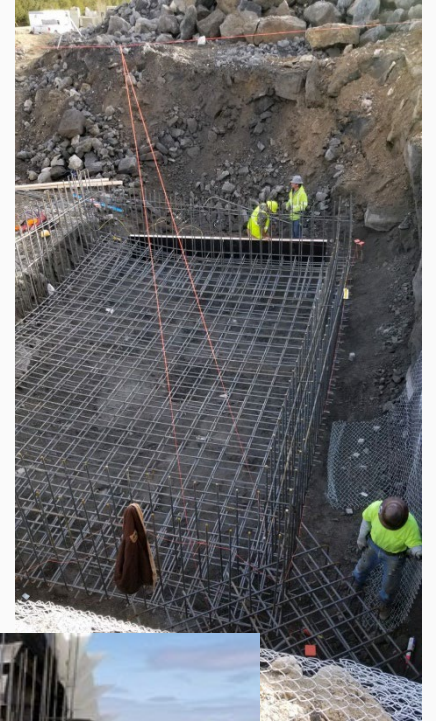




# Main Canal Drop Number 6 (MC6) Project – Hydroelectric

Kuna, Idaho

- REAP grant of \$116,000
- Power sold to local utility company, replaced 2 coal plants
  - Enough for 700 homes
- Employed 30-40 workers during COVID, added \$5 million to local economy
- MC6 large property tax payer in county
  - “Infrastructure that pays taxes instead of collects taxes”



# REAP is key to address climate crisis

- Increased funding to \$2 billion over 10 years
- Cost-share increased up to 50%
- Technical Assistance
- Underutilized Renewable Energy Technologies





# ELPC REAP Goals for Farm Bill 2023

## REAP 3.0

- Modernize: Align with I.R.A.
  - Make REAP a signature rural climate program
- REAP for All: Increase equity
- Create a stronger project pipeline
- Create a REAP rebate-style program
- Create Farm Energy Star
- Contact [Aolsen@elpc.org](mailto:Aolsen@elpc.org) for more details



## REAP for All: Increase equity

- ELPC analysis evaluated proportion of awards compared to populations
  - Funding share higher than population share for Asian Americans and American Indians.
  - Funding lower than population share for African Americans and Hispanics.
- Must address historic USDA discrimination



## Proforestation: Protect carbon reserves in our forests

- An effective climate solution.
- Protect remaining mature and old-growth forests and trees
- Need a strong rule across federal public lands to protect mature and old-growth trees and forests from logging.
- Implications for REAP, USFS, USDA
  - Change. Adapt. Faster.





## Evaluate Climate Impacts

- **Carbon debt:** Stores removed
- **Sequestration capacity** Annual
- **Carbon break-even**

### For

- USFS
- REAP
- Biomass Projects





# Conclusion

*We can do this!*  
*We must!*

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