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Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Announces Investments to Study Renewable Energy Feasibility in Rural Communities

WASHINGTON, – Jan., 20, 2011 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that USDA Rural Development has selected for funding 68 study grants nationwide to determine the feasibility of renewable energy projects. The grants cover all five regions identified by the Secretary in his October speech to the National Press Club. The regions include the Northeast, Central/East, Southeast (including Hawaii), West and Pacific Northwest (including Alaska). In all, studies will be funded in 27 states and the Western Pacific. Funding is made available through the Rural Energy for America Program under the 2008 Farm Bill.

"The Obama Administration is committed to helping our nation become more energy independent by helping rural businesses build renewable energy systems," said Vilsack. "The projects announced today will provide rural small businesses and agricultural producers the opportunity to conduct feasibility studies for renewable energy system installations. These investments will not only help our farmers and small businesses reduce energy costs, but also help find renewable alternatives to generate energy."

For example, in Lorain County, Ohio, Vermilion Wind, LLC, has been selected to receive a \$6,250 feasibility study grant. This project will determine the viability for on-site wind generation at Firelands High School. In Matanuska Susitna Borough, Alaska, Pulse Tidal, LLC, has been selected to receive a \$50,000 feasibility study grant for a hydrokinetic turbine project.

REAP loan guarantees and grants can be used for renewable energy systems, energy efficiency improvements, feasibility studies and energy audits. More information on the REAP program, which was authorized under the 2008 Farm Bill, is at: http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_ReapGrants.html.

Funding of each recipient is contingent upon the recipient meeting the conditions for the grant. For a complete list of award recipients, please [click here](#).

Through its Rural Development mission area, USDA administers and manages more than 40 housing, business and community infrastructure and facility programs through a network of 6,100 employees located in the nation's capital and 500 state and local offices. These programs are designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers, and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America. Rural Development has an existing portfolio of nearly \$142 billion in loans and loan guarantees.

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