

Fortenberry Amendment Rural Energy Self-Sufficiency Initiative

This amendment creates a new Rural Energy Self-Sufficiency Initiative with the purpose of creating models of energy independence on a rural community level. The amendment authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to make grants to up to five eligible rural communities annually. The grants would be used by the communities to develop an integrated renewable energy system in order to increase energy self-sufficiency. The community energy systems would promote energy efficient technologies as well as renewable sources as biofuels, biomass, biogas, wind and solar. This would result in model systems and best practices which could be replicated elsewhere in the nation.

AMENDMENT TO THE ENERGY TITLE
OFFERED BY MR. FORTENBERRY OF NEBRASKA

At the end of the title, add the following:

1 **SEC. _____ . RURAL ENERGY SELF-SUFFICIENCY INITIA-**
2 **TIVE.**

3 (a) **GRANT AUTHORITY.—**

4 (1) **IN GENERAL.—**The Secretary of Agriculture
5 (in this section referred to as the “Secretary”) may
6 make grants in accordance with this section to en-
7 able eligible rural communities to substantially in-
8 crease their energy self-sufficiency.

9 (2) **ELIGIBLE RURAL COMMUNITY DEFINED.—**

10 In this section, the term “eligible rural community”
11 means a community that has a population of fewer
12 than 25,000 individuals, and is not located in a met-
13 ropolitan statistical area (as defined by the Bureau
14 of the Census).

15 (b) **APPLICATIONS.—**

16 (1) **IN GENERAL.—**A community desiring to re-
17 ceive a grant under this section shall submit to the
18 Secretary an application for the grant, which con-
19 tains a description of how the community would use
20 the grant to develop an integrated renewable energy

1 system to substantially increase its energy self-suffi-
2 ciency.

3 (2) INTEGRATED RENEWABLE ENERGY SYS-
4 TEM.—In paragraph (1), the term “integrated re-
5 newable energy system” includes—

6 (A) the use of biofuels;

7 (B) the use of biomass to produce elec-
8 tricity;

9 (C) the use of animal manure to produce
10 biogas as a substitute for natural gas;

11 (D) the use of new technologies to provide
12 highly energy efficient lighting, buildings, or ve-
13 hicles;

14 (E) the use of wind power to produce elec-
15 tricity and hydrogen; and

16 (F) the use of solar energy.

17 (c) CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATIONS.—

18 (1) EVALUATION.—In making grants under this
19 section, the Secretary shall evaluate applications
20 based on their ability to demonstrate—

21 (A) integration of different renewable en-
22 ergy sources at lowest total cost;

23 (B) integration of different renewable en-
24 ergy sources with greatest potential for com-
25 mercialization; and

1 (C) development of best practices, and
2 models for viable rural energy self-sufficiency.

3 (2) PREFERENCE.—In making grants under
4 this section, the Secretary shall give preference to
5 those which propose a project developed or carried
6 out in coordination with—

7 (A) universities or their non-profit founda-
8 tions;

9 (B) Federal, State, or local government
10 agencies;

11 (C) public or private power generation en-
12 tities; or

13 (D) government entities with responsibility
14 for water or natural resources.

15 (d) GRANTS.—

16 (1) COST-SHARING.—The amount of a grant
17 under this section with respect to an application
18 shall not exceed 75 percent of the cost of the activi-
19 ties described in the application.

20 (2) NUMBER OF GRANTS PER YEAR.—The Sec-
21 retary may make not more than 5 grants under this
22 section in each fiscal year.

23 (e) USE OF GRANTS.—A community to which a grant
24 is made under this section shall use the grant to develop
25 an integrated renewable energy system to improve the en-

1 ergy efficiency of the community, and shall document any
2 energy savings resulting from the use of the grant.

3 (f) REPORT TO THE CONGRESS.—The Secretary shall
4 submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of
5 Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutri-
6 tion, and Forestry of the Senate a report that document
7 the best practices and approaches used by grantees receiv-
8 ing funds under this section.

9 (g) LIMITATIONS ON AUTHORIZATION OF APPRO-
10 PRIATIONS.—For grants under this section, there are au-
11 thorized to be appropriated to the Secretary not more than
12 \$5,000,000 for fiscal year 2008, and such sums as may
13 be necessary for fiscal years 2009 through 2012.