

## Support USDA New ERA Program

### Key Facts:

- The New ERA program is a voluntary USDA energy innovation program for electric cooperatives administered by the Rural Utilities Service.
- The \$9.7B program is designed to help electric cooperatives finance the deployment of energy innovation technologies.
- To qualify for the program, projects must enhance the long-term resiliency, reliability, and affordability of rural electric systems.
- NRECA opposes cuts or changes to New ERA that would drive up costs and increase uncertainty for electric co-ops who have projects financed by the program.

### Background

Rural electric cooperatives are not-for-profit rural power providers that are built by, and belong to, the communities they serve. Electric cooperatives provide reliable service to the most rural, hardest-to-reach communities in America, including 92% of persistent poverty counties. Financing for basic electric infrastructure needs through USDA remains critical to ensuring affordable, reliable electric service to this day.

As more of the American economy is electrified, the demand for electricity continues to grow. Over the next five years, peak electricity demand is forecast to grow by 38 gigawatts – the equivalent of adding another California to the nation's grid. To meet future electric demand, electric cooperatives are utilizing programs like New ERA to invest in electric infrastructure today that will be critical to keeping the lights on tomorrow at a cost consumers can afford.

### Powering Rural America

The New ERA program is a financial assistance program at USDA, currently funded at \$9.7B, specifically for electric cooperatives to purchase or build new clean energy systems. Financial assistance may include grants (up to 25% of project cost), loans, grant/loan combinations, debt modifications, and refinancing. The voluntary program allows flexibility for individual electric co-ops to design infrastructure projects that meet community needs without jeopardizing affordability or reliability.

Eligible projects include renewable energy, storage, carbon capture, nuclear, generation and transmission system efficiency improvements, and other projects that will achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and otherwise aid disadvantaged rural communities.

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