

The Rural Energy Improvement Act builds upon the highly successful Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) to create opportunity for farmers and small business owners

Mankato, MN—Today, Congressman Tim Walz announced the introduction of legislation that will improve access to rural energy programs and build upon the highly successful Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), which provides farmers and small businesses the opportunity to reduce overhead operating costs and increase efficiency. Walz introduced the legislation in late May, along with Congressman Peter Welch of Vermont, for consideration in the 2012 Farm Bill.

“We must take control of our energy future with an aggressive, forward thinking energy policy that works for rural America,” said Walz. **“Reducing overhead energy costs for local farmers and small businesses will increase their efficiency and help them grow and prosper—and that creates jobs. While we won’t transition off of oil overnight, this measure will work to lessen our dependence on unstable countries in the Middle East and will move our country towards an energy independent future.”**

REAP has proven to be a highly successful program and provides farmers and small business owners with the tools they need to become more efficient and move towards an energy independent future. To date, REAP has helped create over 7,200 new clean energy projects across the country.

Walz’s Rural Energy Improvement Act will streamline REAP to make it work better for farmers and small business owners in three ways. First, it will expedite approvals by easing the application process and tailoring it to the specific needs of farmers and business owners. Second, it will reduce burdensome and redundant regulations to make REAP operate more efficiently. Finally, in order to meet high demand, the Improvement Act increases funding to ensure farmers and small business owners who want to become more energy efficient, have the ability to do so.

Walz believes that an investment in our farmers and small businesses is an investment in our future and looks forward to writing a new farm bill that works for everyone.

###