

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2791

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a renewable energy grant program for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands of the United States, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 22, 2021

Mr. LIEU (for himself, Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN, Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. SOTO) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, and Science, Space, and Technology, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a renewable energy grant program for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands of the United States, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Renewable Energy for
5 Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. RENEWABLE ENERGY GRANT PROGRAM.**

2 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 180 days after
3 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agri-
4 culture shall establish a renewable energy program (in this
5 section referred to as the “program”) under which the
6 Secretary may award grants to covered entities to facili-
7 tate projects, in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands of the
8 United States, described in subsection (c).

9 (b) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible for a grant under
10 the program, a covered entity shall submit to the Sec-
11 retary an application at such time, in such form, and con-
12 taining such information as the Secretary may require.

13 (c) GRANT USES.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—A covered entity receiving a
15 grant under the program may use grant funds for
16 a project, in Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands of the
17 United States—

18 (A) to develop or construct a renewable en-
19 ergy system;

20 (B) to carry out an activity to increase en-
21 ergy efficiency;

22 (C) to develop or construct an energy stor-
23 age system or device for—

24 (i) a system developed or constructed
25 under subparagraph (A); or

1 (ii) an activity carried out under sub-
2 paragraph (B);

3 (D) to develop or construct—

4 (i) a smart grid; or

5 (ii) a microgrid; or

6 (E) to train residents of Puerto Rico or
7 the Virgin Islands of the United States to de-
8 velop, construct, maintain, or operate a renew-
9 able energy system.

10 (2) LIMITATION.—A covered entity receiving a
11 grant under the program may not use grant funds
12 to develop or construct a facility that generates elec-
13 tricity using energy derived from—

14 (A) fossil fuels; or

15 (B) nuclear power.

16 (d) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary of En-
17 ergy shall ensure that Department of Energy national lab-
18 oratories offer to provide technical assistance to each cov-
19 ered entity carrying out a project assisted with a grant
20 under the program.

21 (e) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the es-
22 tablishment of the program, and on an annual basis there-
23 after, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report con-
24 taining—

1 (1) an estimate of the amount of funds dis-
2 bursed under the program;

3 (2) an estimate of the energy conservation
4 achieved as a result of the program;

5 (3) a description of challenges encountered in
6 implementing projects described in subsection (c)(1);
7 and

8 (4) recommendations as to additional legislative
9 measures to increase the use of renewable energy in
10 Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands of the United
11 States, as appropriate.

12 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
13 are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be
14 necessary to carry out this section.

15 **SEC. 3. GAO STUDY AND REPORT.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—

17 (1) STUDY AND REPORT.—Not later than 180
18 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the
19 Comptroller General of the United States shall—

20 (A) conduct a study regarding renewable
21 energy and energy efficiency in Puerto Rico and
22 the Virgin Islands of the United States; and

23 (B) submit to Congress a report con-
24 taining—

25 (i) the findings of the study; and

1 (ii) related recommendations.

2 (2) COMPONENTS.—The study conducted under
3 paragraph (1) shall consider, in relation to Puerto
4 Rico and the Virgin Islands of the United States,
5 the potential—

6 (A) to modify existing electric power sys-
7 tems to use renewable energy sources;

8 (B) to expand the use of microgrids; and

9 (C) to improve energy resiliency.

10 (b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
11 authorized to be appropriated \$1,500,000 to carry out this
12 section.

13 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

14 In this Act, the following definitions apply:

15 (1) COVERED ENTITY.—The term “covered en-
16 tity” means a not-for-profit organization determined
17 eligible by the Secretary of Agriculture for purposes
18 of this Act.

19 (2) DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY NATIONAL LAB-
20 ORATORIES.—The term “Department of Energy na-
21 tional laboratories” has the same meaning as the
22 term “National Laboratory” under section 2 of the
23 Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 15801).

24 (3) MICROGRID.—The term “microgrid” means
25 an electric system—

1 (A) that serves the local community with a
2 power generation and distribution system; and

3 (B) that has the ability—

4 (i) to disconnect from a traditional
5 electric grid; and

6 (ii) to operate autonomously when dis-
7 connected.

8 (4) RENEWABLE ENERGY; RENEWABLE ENERGY
9 SYSTEM.—The terms “renewable energy” and “re-
10 newable energy system” have the meanings given
11 those terms in section 9001 of the Farm Security
12 and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 8101).

13 (5) SMART GRID.—The term “smart grid”
14 means an intelligent electric grid that uses digital
15 communications technology, information systems,
16 and automation to, while maintaining high system
17 reliability—

18 (A) detect and react to local changes in
19 usage;

20 (B) improve system operating efficiency;
21 and

22 (C) reduce spending costs.

○