

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 3489

To amend the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to establish an energy circuit rider program to disseminate technical and other assistance to rural communities to support energy efficiency and clean energy projects that save energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 13, 2023

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. WELCH) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

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## A BILL

To amend the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to establish an energy circuit rider program to disseminate technical and other assistance to rural communities to support energy efficiency and clean energy projects that save energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

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 “Energy Circuit Riders  
5 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. ENERGY CIRCUIT RIDER PROGRAM.**

2 Subtitle D of the Consolidated Farm and Rural De-  
3 velopment Act is amended by inserting after section 378  
4 (7 U.S.C. 2008m) the following:

5 **“SEC. 379. ENERGY CIRCUIT RIDER PROGRAM.**

6 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

7 “(1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligible en-  
8 tity’ means—

9 “(A) a State;

10 “(B) an Indian Tribe (as defined in section  
11 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Edu-  
12 cation Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304));

13 “(C) a nonprofit organization;

14 “(D) a cooperative extension service;

15 “(E) an institution of higher education;

16 and

17 “(F) a regional planning commission or  
18 other public entity serving 2 or more rural  
19 areas.

20 “(2) ENERGY CIRCUIT RIDER.—The term ‘En-  
21 ergy Circuit Rider’ means an individual who is  
22 trained to provide and support, on a professional  
23 basis, assistance (including technical assistance) and  
24 informed decisionmaking in the planning, financing,  
25 and implementation of energy efficiency or clean en-

1 energy projects, including with respect to 1 or more of  
2 the following:

3 “(A) Energy planning.

4 “(B) Energy audits.

5 “(C) Applicable Federal funding opportu-  
6 nities and tax incentives.

7 “(D) Applicable State, local, and utility-  
8 based incentives, including, as appropriate, co-  
9 ordinating with the State energy office in that  
10 State.

11 “(E) Project financing.

12 “(F) Grant writing.

13 “(G) Community-based capacity building.

14 “(3) SECRETARY.—The term ‘Secretary’ means  
15 the Secretary, acting through the Under Secretary  
16 for Rural Development.

17 “(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall estab-  
18 lish a program, to be known as the ‘Energy Circuit Rider  
19 Program’, under which the Secretary shall provide to eligi-  
20 ble entities grants for the hiring, training, and retention  
21 by eligible entities of 1 or more Energy Circuit Riders.

22 “(c) GRANTS.—

23 “(1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive a  
24 grant under the Energy Circuit Rider Program, an  
25 eligible entity shall submit to the Secretary an appli-

1 cation at such time, in such manner, and containing  
2 such information as the Secretary may require.

3 “(2) TERM.—The term of a grant provided  
4 under the Energy Circuit Rider Program shall be  
5 more than 3, but not more than 6, years, as the Sec-  
6 retary determines to be appropriate to achieve the  
7 purposes of this section.

8 “(3) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of  
9 the cost of carrying out activities under the grant  
10 shall be not more than 75 percent.

11 “(4) PRIORITY.—In providing grants under the  
12 Energy Circuit Rider Program, the Secretary shall  
13 give priority to an eligible entity the application  
14 under paragraph (1) of which is recommended by  
15 the director of the relevant State rural development  
16 office.

17 “(d) ENERGY CIRCUIT RIDER ASSISTANCE.—An En-  
18 ergy Circuit Rider employed by an eligible entity using a  
19 grant provided under this section—

20 “(1) shall offer assistance and support de-  
21 scribed in subsection (a)(2) to not fewer than 2  
22 rural areas served by, or in the vicinity of, the eligi-  
23 ble entity; and

24 “(2) may provide technical assistance to the eli-  
25 gible entity in applying for—

1           “(A) loans under section 6407(c) of the  
2           Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of  
3           2002 (7 U. S.C. 8107a(c)); and

4           “(B) financial assistance under the Rural  
5           Energy for America Program established under  
6           section 9007 of that Act (7 U.S.C. 8107).

7           “(e) INFORMATION SHARING.—

8           “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall facili-  
9           tate the sharing among Energy Circuit Riders of in-  
10          formation relating to best practices.

11          “(2) INFORMATION FROM OTHER AGENCIES.—

12          The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of  
13          Energy, the Secretary of Transportation, the Sec-  
14          retary of the Treasury, the Administrator of the En-  
15          vironmental Protection Agency, the Chief of Engi-  
16          neers, and the heads of such other Federal depart-  
17          ments and agencies as the Secretary determines to  
18          be appropriate, shall make available to Energy Cir-  
19          cuit Riders information relating to other Federal in-  
20          centives available to eligible entities for energy effi-  
21          ciency and clean energy projects.

22          “(f) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not less frequently  
23          than annually, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a  
24          report describing the accomplishments of the Energy Cir-  
25          cuit Rider Program, including with respect to—

1           “(1) energy savings;

2           “(2) monetary savings to communities; and

3           “(3) reductions in carbon emissions.

4           “(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
5 is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry  
6 out this section \$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024  
7 through 2028.”.

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