

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Rural Minnesota-based CURE helps win \$9.7 billion for Rural Electric Co-ops in Inflation Reduction Act

**Montevideo, Minnesota, August 17, 2022** — CURE, a Montevideo-based rural democracy organization, led the national Rural Power Coalition to help secure \$9.7 billion in funding for Rural Electric Co-ops as part of the Inflation Reduction Act. These funds will help rural Americans save money, invest in clean energy, and create 90,000 jobs. Just as the Rural Electrification Act improved rural life for the better in the 1930s, the historic investments of the Inflation Reduction Act help rural people and places thrive and lead today.

Over 1.7 million Minnesotans get their power from a Rural Electric Co-op. Unfortunately, electric co-ops severely lag in the adoption of renewable energy. Two-thirds of all power distributed by electric co-ops comes from fossil fuels. As a result, co-op member-owners pay much more than their city-dwelling neighbors for this dirty electricity. This hurts rural families and holds back rural job creation.

“We (CURE) are based in rural Minnesota, so we see how important it is for our neighbors to have reliable, affordable, clean energy. Unfortunately, before this legislation, co-ops had less incentive to pursue the clean energy options their member-owners wanted,” said Erik Hatlestad, Energy Democracy Program Director at CURE. He continued, “This is the largest investment in rural electrification in U.S. history, and it clears the way for rural Americans to build the clean energy future.”

There are two more provisions that boost the development of rural renewable energy development. Electric co-ops finally have access to direct pay credits for wind, solar, and other renewable energy projects (for-profit utilities have received these clean energy incentives for years), and the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) is receiving an extra \$1.965 billion in funding. CURE and the Rural Power Coalition also played a significant role in securing these provisions for co-ops.

While CURE is celebrating this hard-fought victory for rural communities, they acknowledge the real challenge is just beginning. Electric co-op member-owners in Minnesota and across the country must fight for power generating co-ops to prioritize the kind of clean energy development that member-owners want and that grows local jobs.

“Co-op member-owners must be put back in the driver’s seat to ensure that rural electric co-ops use these funds in the most effective ways to develop more renewable energy that generates wealth throughout our communities instead of continuing to enrich large fossil fuel companies,” said Hatlestad, “This is a once in a generation opportunity, and co-op member-owners can power their co-ops and communities to move rural America forward.”

*CURE (Clean Up the River Environment) is a rural-based organization focusing on climate, energy, water, and democracy issues with offices in Montevideo, Minnesota. Our work strives to build grassroots community power to address the linkages between environmental challenges, societal inequities, and other systemic challenges facing our communities.*

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