



February 12, 2020

The Honorable Bobby Rush  
2188 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Fred Upton  
2183 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rush and Ranking Member Upton:

I write in support of H.R. 4447, the Expanding Access to Sustainable Energy Act of 2019 (the EASE Act). Thank you for considering this important legislation, which will spur development of energy storage projects in rural America.

The EASE Act builds upon the success of the SUNDA project, a collaboration between the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, and 17 rural electric cooperatives, which significantly accelerated solar deployment in rural America. In fact, co-op solar capacity (owned and purchased) increased ten-fold from 2013 to 2018.

Under the EASE Act, co-ops will be eligible to receive grants to identify, evaluate and design energy storage and microgrid projects. These grants may fund feasibility studies, detailed engineering of projects, and integration planning. Co-ops will also receive technical assistance from DOE and experts in the field. In exchange, participating co-ops will spread the message to other co-ops, showcasing how these projects were implemented, how barriers were overcome and what potential cost savings were achieved.

While many co-ops have deployed some energy storage, there are still financial, technical and logistical hurdles to its expansion. These grants will help them experiment with the technologies, develop plans for commercialization and create workable business models.

Energy storage can help overcome difficult technical problems caused by fast fluctuation of energy delivered to the grid from intermittent sources. It is particularly useful in rural America as remote communities sometimes have difficulty receiving power through an overloaded transmission system. Successfully implementing these technologies may allow co-ops to purchase power at non-peak times at a considerable reduction in cost and have the power available for their communities

at peak times. Thank you both for considering the EASE Act and I strongly urge the Committee to pass this bill swiftly.

Sincerely,



Louis Finkel  
Senior Vice President, Government Relations  
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

cc: The Honorable Frank Pallone  
The Honorable Greg Walden  
The Honorable Tom O'Halleran  
The Honorable Markwayne Mullin  
The Honorable Peter Welch  
The Honorable Susan Brooks