



# Briefing Notice

## Rural Communities, Climate, and COVID-19 Recovery

June 16, 17, and 18, 2020

Times vary

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The **Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI)** invites you to join us for a series of one-hour online briefings about rural communities, climate change, and COVID-19 recovery. The briefings will explore the challenges rural communities face, including high energy costs, a struggling agriculture industry, and low investment in resilient infrastructure, as well as the solutions rural communities have developed in the face of these multiple stressors.

### Implementing Energy Efficiency Programs in Rural America

June 16 | 12:00 – 1:00 PM EDT

In rural communities, families pay on average about 40 percent more for energy compared to their urban counterparts. This briefing will explore how more than 60 electric cooperatives and public utilities across the country are using an innovative financing mechanism—on-bill financing—to fund clean energy upgrades for homes and small businesses to reduce these burdensome energy costs. **Rob Ardis**, Santee Electric Cooperative's President and CEO, and **Jay Kirby**, Vice President of Public Affairs, will discuss the co-op's Help My House on-bill financing program in South Carolina. **Kate LaTour**, Director of Government Relations for the National Cooperative Business Association CLUSA International (NCBA-CLUSA), will then describe the value of including on-bill financing in any upcoming economic stimulus package to encourage cost-effective energy efficiency and renewable energy projects that will deliver immediate and long-term, self-sustaining benefits.

### The Bioeconomy's Role in COVID-19 Recovery and Climate Solutions

June 17 | 2:00 – 3:00 PM EDT

Rural areas have been hard hit by the economic fallout from the COVID-19 crisis. While farms struggle to remain financially solvent, the tremendous benefits of the bioeconomy are at risk. This briefing will provide an overview of the health, climate, and economic advantages of bio-based products and the challenges currently facing the industry. **Patty Judge**, former Iowa Lieutenant Governor and Secretary of Agriculture for Iowa, will offer a perspective on the bioeconomy and rural America's road to recovery from COVID-19. **Stefan Unnasch**, Managing Director of Lifecycle Associates, will discuss the role of biofuels in greenhouse gas reduction strategies and how biofuels can improve air quality compared to fossil alternatives.

### Rural Communities Rise to the Challenge of Dual Disasters

June 18 | 12:00 – 1:00 PM EDT

Rural communities face unique challenges in preparing for flooding and addressing related infrastructure needs. Local governments with small staffs often do not have the capacity to apply for disaster preparedness funding and can be left out of valuable federal programs. This briefing will characterize these issues in the context of COVID-19 and highlight solutions communities are implementing to meet them. **Dr. Richard Norton**, Professor of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Michigan (UM), will discuss his work with Great Lakes coastal communities, which are mostly small and rural communities, and he will use the example of the recent Midland dam floods to highlight governance challenges in repairing critical infrastructure. **Steve Samuelson, CFM**, National Flood Insurance Program Coordinator for the State of Kansas Department of Agriculture, will discuss the issues small towns face when attempting to access federal mapping and flood protection programs, and the programs that are working to build flood resilience in these rural areas.

These events are free and open to the public.

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