



Environmental and Energy Study Institute

Rep. Clyburn and USDA Celebrate \$13 Million Loan for Energy Efficiency Improvements in South Carolina

November 2, 2018—Rep. James Clyburn (D-SC) and Department of Agriculture (USDA) officials celebrated on Wednesday a **\$13 million USDA no-interest loan** to a group of seven South Carolina electric cooperatives to make energy-savings improvements to approximately 1,300 co-op member homes. "The Environmental and Energy Study Institute welcomes this funding and Congressman Clyburn's continued support for energy efficiency initiatives. We have been working closely with South Carolina cooperatives—and cooperatives throughout the United States—to help their members reduce their energy use and bills, while improving their home comfort," said EESI Executive Director Carol Werner.



The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina

The loan will allow the South Carolina co-ops to expand their **Help My House® on-bill financing program**. In the program, co-ops provide guidance, financing and quality assurance enabling their members to make substantial, cost-effective home energy improvements. Participants pay no upfront costs, but repay the co-op over time through a fixed charge on their monthly electric bill. To expand access to as many members as possible, applicants are screened based on bill payment history rather than credit scores. **Help My House** has so far improved 740

homes, with initial participants **saving more than 30 percent on their energy bills**, on average.

EESI has led an [on-bill financing initiative](#) since 2011, when it began working with South Carolina co-ops to develop the **Help My House** program.

The \$13 million loan is one of the first awards made by the **Rural Energy Savings Program (RESP)**, which is run by the USDA's Rural Utilities Service (RUS). RESP provides no-interest, 20-year loans to electric cooperatives and other rural energy providers for the purpose of reducing the energy costs of member-customers. Rep. Clyburn first introduced legislation to create RESP in 2010; the program was ultimately enacted as part of the 2014 Farm Bill and launched RUS in 2016. RESP has been a key policy priority for EESI for many years, as it is a vital tool for rural utilities to develop and expand on-bill financing programs that help unlock significant energy efficiency savings for their customers of all income levels.

"The U.S. Department of Agriculture has recently announced an additional **\$100 million in funding available nationally for the Rural Energy Savings Program**. I hope cooperatives and other utilities across the country will look to the model here in South Carolina for lowering energy costs for consumers, reducing electricity consumption to help the environment, and creating jobs in rural communities," said Rep. Clyburn.

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***The Environmental and Energy Study Institute** (www.eesi.org) is an independent, non-profit organization advancing innovative policy solutions to set us on a cleaner, more secure and sustainable energy path. EESI educates policymakers, builds coalitions and develops policy in support of energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable biomass, sustainable buildings, and sustainable transportation. EESI was founded by a bipartisan Congressional caucus in 1984, and its strong relationship with Congress helps EESI serve as a trusted source of credible, non-partisan information on energy and environmental issues. EESI receives no congressional funding and is supported through contributions and grants.*