



EESI and NCBA CLUSA Announce Partnership for Advancing an Inclusive Rural Energy Economy

November 14, 2017—[The Environmental and Energy Study Institute](#) (EESI) and the [National Cooperative Business Association CLUSA International](#) (NCBA CLUSA) today announced their new **Partnership for Advancing an Inclusive Rural Energy Economy**. The Partnership will put more money in the pockets of people in rural communities by supporting rural electric cooperatives (co-ops) in developing on-bill financing programs for energy efficiency upgrades, community projects in solar, and clean energy storage.

The end goal is to **reduce energy costs, improve reliability and comfort, and increase efficiency in rural households across the country**. The Partnership was made possible through a one-year, \$150,000 grant from the [New York Community Trust](#) (NYCT).

"On-bill financing" gives electric co-op members and other utility customers the ability to finance energy improvements that are repaid over time on their energy bill. This convenient approach is an exciting opportunity to expand clean energy access to more homes and businesses. Because "on-bill" financing programs can be designed to be cash-flow positive and to use bill payment history instead of credit scores, many on-bill programs can successfully serve lower-income families who are unable to take advantage of rebate programs or traditional financing.

"On-bill financing means **more money in the pockets of rural households**," says **EESI Executive Director Carol Werner**. "On-bill financing makes it much easier and cheaper for households to invest in renewable energy and energy efficiency, which helps them save money. It makes their homes more comfortable, and creates local jobs. Electric co-ops have been innovative leaders of this approach over the past decade, and there is enormous potential to grow: there are more than 900 electric co-ops across the country. EESI has been actively supporting on-bill financing since 2010. We've helped develop federal loan opportunities that allow rural electric cooperatives to pursue on-bill programs."

"Cooperatives are the best way to make sure this program reaches those who need it most," stated **Doug O'Brien, executive vice president of programs at NCBA CLUSA**. "Rural electric co-ops, as member-owned entities, are uniquely organized to always put their members first. With growing opportunities in energy efficiency and renewable energy, cooperatives are the way to make sure that people have access to these cutting edge solutions."

"The 42 million Americans served by rural electric co-ops should have an opportunity to be part of the clean energy revolution," says Arturo Garcia-Costas, program officer for the environment at NYCT. "We need to support those who want to embrace technologies that can save money, protect the environment, and safeguard their family's health."

The partnership's leads are **Jason Walsh for NCBA CLUSA** and **John-Michael Cross for EESI**. Walsh was previously a Senior Advisor to the U.S. Department of Energy's Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE), and the Director of EERE's Office of Strategic Programs; he also served as a Senior Policy Advisor at the White House Domestic Policy Council. Cross has led EESI's On-Bill Financing Project for the past six years.

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The New York Community Trust grant uses funds from its Henry Phillip Kraft Family Memorial Fund and its Oakey L. and Ethel Witherspoon Alexander Fund.

Useful resource:

[EESI's On-Bill Financing Project](#)

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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.*

***The National Cooperative Business Association CLUSA International** (www.ncba.coop) is the primary voice in the United States for people who use cooperatives to build a better world through an inclusive economy. NCBA CLUSA protects, advances and promotes the cooperative business model, recognizing it as the equitable, sustainable, participatory and stable way to grow the economy. Through its international development program, NCBA CLUSA works through the cooperative principles in more than 20 countries in Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia. Since 1916, NCBA CLUSA has shared the cooperative advantage, highlighting the impact cooperatives have in bettering the lives of individuals, families and communities. Through its advocacy program, NCBA CLUSA educates lawmakers and promotes the cooperative business model, working with public and private thought leaders.*