

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 872

To authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to make competitive grants to community colleges and advanced technology education centers partnering with community colleges to support the education and training of technicians in the fields of bioenergy and other agriculture-based, renewable energy resources, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 7, 2007

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to make competitive grants to community colleges and advanced technology education centers partnering with community colleges to support the education and training of technicians in the fields of bioenergy and other agriculture-based, renewable energy resources, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “National Endowment
5 for Workforce Education in Renewables and Agriculture
6 Act of 2007” or “NEW ERA Act of 2007”.

1 **SEC. 2. COMPETITIVE GRANTS FOR BIOENERGY TECHNI-**
2 **CIAN EDUCATION AND TRAINING THROUGH**
3 **COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND ADVANCED**
4 **TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION CENTERS**
5 **PARTNERING WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGES.**

6 (a) COMPETITIVE GRANTS.—The Secretary of Agri-
7 culture may make competitive grants to community col-
8 leges and advanced technology education centers described
9 in subsection (b) to support the education and training
10 of technicians in the fields of bioenergy and other agri-
11 culture-based, renewable energy resources.

12 (b) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—Grants may be made
13 under this section only to a community college or advanced
14 technology education center that—

15 (1) is in existence as of the date of the enact-
16 ment of this Act and located in the State of Iowa
17 or other Midwestern States selected by the Sec-
18 retary;

19 (2) the Secretary determines has a proven
20 record of development and implementation of pro-
21 grams to meet the needs of students, educators, and
22 business and industry to supply the agriculture-
23 based, renewable energy field with qualified and
24 trained technicians; and

25 (3) demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Sec-
26 retary the ability to leverage existing partnerships

1 and develop educational and occupational outreach
2 and training programs with secondary schools, four-
3 year institutions of higher education, and the agri-
4 cultural extension system to fill the next generation
5 of emerging technician positions in the fields of bio-
6 energy and other agriculture-based, renewable en-
7 ergy resources.

8 (c) EDUCATION AND TRAINING PRIORITIES.—In se-
9 lecting grant recipients under this section, the Secretary
10 shall give priority to the following occupational education
11 and training initiatives:

12 (1) Improving the capacity of bioenergy service
13 industry technicians to meet the needs of the agri-
14 cultural-based bioenergy sector, particularly among
15 small- and medium-sized businesses.

16 (2) Enhancement of training of instructors at
17 community colleges and other instructors in the
18 areas of agriculture-based bioenergy research, effi-
19 ciency, and conservation.

20 (3) Identification of agricultural-based bio-
21 energy employment opportunities in the renewable
22 energy areas of biomass and other renewable energy
23 areas within the private sector, particularly among
24 small- and medium-sized businesses.

1 (4) Advancement of agriculture-based bioenergy
2 advanced environmental technology education and
3 training through curriculum development, profes-
4 sional development, and program improvements at
5 community colleges, in partnership with other insti-
6 tutions of higher education and secondary schools.

7 (5) Development of working partnerships be-
8 tween community colleges and nonprofit organiza-
9 tions dedicated to bioenergy education and training
10 for future bioenergy services career opportunities in
11 the agriculture-based renewable energy field.

12 (d) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out this section,
13 the Secretary shall consult with the National Science
14 Foundation, the Small Business Administration, and other
15 appropriate Federal agencies.

16 (e) EVALUATION COMPONENT.—An application for a
17 grant under this section shall include a comprehensive
18 evaluation component to ensure the quality and achieve-
19 ment of project bioenergy technician education and train-
20 ing goals and objectives.

21 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

22 (1) COMMUNITY COLLEGE.—The term “commu-
23 nity college” means an institution of higher edu-
24 cation—

1 (A) that admits as regular students per-
2 sons who are beyond the age of compulsory
3 school attendance in the State in which the in-
4 stitution is located and who have the ability to
5 benefit from the training offered by the institu-
6 tion;

7 (B) that does not provide an educational
8 program for which it awards a bachelor's de-
9 gree, or an equivalent degree; and

10 (C) that—

11 (i) provides an educational program of
12 not less than two years that is acceptable
13 for full credit toward such a degree; or

14 (ii) offers a two-year program in engi-
15 neering, mathematics, or the physical or
16 biological sciences, designed to prepare a
17 student to work as a technician or at the
18 semiprofessional level in engineering, sci-
19 entific, or other technological fields requir-
20 ing the understanding and application of
21 basic engineering, scientific, or mathe-
22 matical principles of knowledge.

23 (2) ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION CEN-
24 TER.—The term “advanced technology education
25 center” means an educational entity that features a

1 community college partnering with other institutions
2 of higher education and with direct linkages with
3 private industry involved in the agriculture-based
4 bioenergy economy of the United States.

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