

#### 117TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION

# H. R. 2791

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a renewable energy grant program for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands of the United States, and for other purposes.

#### IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

April 22, 2021

Mr. Lieu (for himself, Miss González-Colón, Ms. Plaskett, Mr. Gri-Jalva, and Mr. Soto) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, and Science, Space, and Technology, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

## A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a renewable energy grant program for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands of the United States, 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 "Renewable Energy for
- 5 Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands Act".

### 1 SEC. 2. RENEWABLE ENERGY GRANT PROGRAM.

| 2  | (a) Establishment.—Not later than 180 days after            |
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| 3  | the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agri-   |
| 4  | culture shall establish a renewable energy program (in this |
| 5  | section referred to as the "program") under which the       |
| 6  | Secretary may award grants to covered entities to facili-   |
| 7  | tate projects, in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands of the |
| 8  | United States, described in subsection (c).                 |
| 9  | (b) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible for a grant under          |
| 10 | the program, a covered entity shall submit to the Sec-      |
| 11 | retary an application at such time, in such form, and con-  |
| 12 | taining such information as the Secretary may require.      |
| 13 | (c) Grant Uses.—  |
| 14 | (1) In general.—A covered entity receiving a                |
| 15 | grant under the program may use grant funds for             |
| 16 | a project, in Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands of the      |
| 17 | United States—  |
| 18 | (A) to develop or construct a renewable en-                 |
| 19 | ergy system;  |
| 20 | (B) to carry out an activity to increase en-                |
| 21 | ergy efficiency;  |
| 22 | (C) to develop or construct an energy stor-                 |
| 23 | age system or device for—                                   |
| 24 | (i) a system developed or constructed                       |
| 25 | under subparagraph (A); or                                  |

| 1  | (ii) an activity carried out under sub-                      |
|----|--|
| 2  | paragraph (B);   |
| 3  | (D) to develop or construct—                                 |
| 4  | (i) a smart grid; or   |
| 5  | (ii) a microgrid; or   |
| 6  | (E) to train residents of Puerto Rico or                     |
| 7  | the Virgin Islands of the United States to de-               |
| 8  | velop, construct, maintain, or operate a renew-              |
| 9  | able energy system.  |
| 10 | (2) Limitation.—A covered entity receiving a                 |
| 11 | grant under the program may not use grant funds              |
| 12 | to develop or construct a facility that generates elec-      |
| 13 | tricity using energy derived from—                           |
| 14 | (A) fossil fuels; or   |
| 15 | (B) nuclear power.   |
| 16 | (d) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary of En-               |
| 17 | ergy shall ensure that Department of Energy national lab-    |
| 18 | oratories offer to provide technical assistance to each cov- |
| 19 | ered entity carrying out a project assisted with a grant     |
| 20 | under the program.   |
| 21 | (e) Report.—Not later than two years after the es-           |
| 22 | tablishment of the program, and on an annual basis there-    |
| 23 | after, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report con-  |
| 24 | taining—   |

| 1  | (1) an estimate of the amount of funds dis-           |
|----|---|
| 2  | bursed under the program;                             |
| 3  | (2) an estimate of the energy conservation            |
| 4  | achieved as a result of the program;                  |
| 5  | (3) a description of challenges encountered in        |
| 6  | implementing projects described in subsection (c)(1); |
| 7  | and   |
| 8  | (4) recommendations as to additional legislative      |
| 9  | measures to increase the use of renewable energy in   |
| 10 | Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands of the United      |
| 11 | States, as appropriate.                               |
| 12 | (f) Authorization of Appropriations.—There            |
| 13 | are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be |
| 14 | necessary to carry out this section.                  |
| 15 | SEC. 3. GAO STUDY AND REPORT.                         |
| 16 | (a) In General.—                                      |
| 17 | (1) Study and report.—Not later than 180              |
| 18 | days after the date of enactment of this Act, the     |
| 19 | Comptroller General of the United States shall—       |
| 20 | (A) conduct a study regarding renewable               |
| 21 | energy and energy efficiency in Puerto Rico and       |
| 22 | the Virgin Islands of the United States; and          |
| 23 | (B) submit to Congress a report con-                  |
| 24 | taining—  |
| 25 | (i) the findings of the study; and                    |

| 1  | (ii) related recommendations.                               |
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| 2  | (2) Components.—The study conducted under                   |
| 3  | paragraph (1) shall consider, in relation to Puerto         |
| 4  | Rico and the Virgin Islands of the United States,           |
| 5  | the potential—  |
| 6  | (A) to modify existing electric power sys-                  |
| 7  | tems to use renewable energy sources;                       |
| 8  | (B) to expand the use of microgrids; and                    |
| 9  | (C) to improve energy resiliency.                           |
| 10 | (b) Authorization of Appropriations.—There is               |
| 11 | authorized to be appropriated \$1,500,000 to carry out this |
| 12 | section.  |
| 13 | SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.  |
| 14 | In this Act, the following definitions apply:               |
| 15 | (1) COVERED ENTITY.—The term "covered en-                   |
| 16 | tity" means a not-for-profit organization determined        |
| 17 | eligible by the Secretary of Agriculture for purposes       |
| 18 | of this Act.  |
| 19 | (2) Department of energy national lab-                      |
| 20 | ORATORIES.—The term "Department of Energy na-               |
| 21 | tional laboratories" has the same meaning as the            |
| 22 | term "National Laboratory" under section 2 of the           |
| 23 | Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 15801).                |
| 24 | (3) Microgrid.—The term "microgrid" means                   |
| 25 | an electric system—   |

| 1  | (A) that serves the local community with a           |
|----|--|
| 2  | power generation and distribution system; and        |
| 3  | (B) that has the ability—                            |
| 4  | (i) to disconnect from a traditional                 |
| 5  | electric grid; and                                   |
| 6  | (ii) to operate autonomously when dis-               |
| 7  | connected.   |
| 8  | (4) Renewable energy; renewable energy               |
| 9  | SYSTEM.—The terms "renewable energy" and "re-        |
| 10 | newable energy system" have the meanings given       |
| 11 | those terms in section 9001 of the Farm Security     |
| 12 | and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 8101).    |
| 13 | (5) SMART GRID.—The term "smart grid"                |
| 14 | means an intelligent electric grid that uses digital |
| 15 | communications technology, information systems,      |
| 16 | and automation to, while maintaining high system     |
| 17 | reliability—   |
| 18 | (A) detect and react to local changes in             |
| 19 | usage;   |
| 20 | (B) improve system operating efficiency;             |
| 21 | and  |
| 22 | (C) reduce spending costs.                           |
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