

PSC: Approves robust rural and agricultural energy efficiency program

Posted on Friday, Jul 27, 2018

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Madison – This week, the Public Service Commission (PSC) approved a new energy efficiency program, intended to serve Wisconsin’s rural and agricultural energy customers. The new program focuses on the agricultural and industrial needs of Wisconsin’s rural communities, by offering over \$8 million in incentives.

To ensure that all Wisconsinites are able to take advantage of Wisconsin’s energy efficiency program known as Focus on Energy, the Commission directed staff to create a rural and agricultural energy efficiency program within the 2019-2022 quadrennium. Focus on Energy has been a catalyst for growth and energy innovation since its inception in 2001. The rural initiatives that have been outlined by the Commission build upon Wisconsin’s continued energy efficiency success.

“We are making strides to improve energy efficiency in Wisconsin’s rural communities,” said Governor Walker. “Wisconsin’s agricultural and rural communities are the backbone of our state contributing substantially to our state’s history and economy. These new incentives offer the opportunity to modernize homes, farms, and businesses. We can help improve energy reliability and our environment, all while reducing the overall cost to Wisconsinites.”

Within the program, the Commission expects to award incentives of \$3.1 million within the agricultural sector, \$3 million within the industrial sector, \$1.9 million is allocated towards small business and residential customers, and an additional

\$300,000 in propane offerings will be made available. This targeted, cost-effective program option ensures that there is a balanced approach taken, with various sectors represented.

Commissioner Rich Zipperer, who led discussions on the issue, stated “It is vital that Wisconsin intentionally and proactively makes an effort to reach rural Wisconsin with these types of programs and incentives.” Commissioner Zipperer went on to say, “Our agricultural and industrial business sectors are fundamental contributors to Wisconsin’s economy. We must continually work to ensure the proper tools are awarded to local businesses that take on efficiency projects, which will allow them to reinvest in their businesses moving forward.”

In the upcoming weeks, PSC staff will be working with various stakeholders and state agencies to begin implementing the new rural and agricultural energy efficiency program. The program will continue throughout the quadrennium, with at least \$5 million being awarded each year.