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## **Dairyland Awarded New Empowering Rural America Program Grant**

*President Biden Announces Dairyland Award with USDA Secretary Vilsack  
\$579 Million for Renewable Energy Expansion & Economic Growth in Rural Midwest*

LA CROSSE, WI— President Joe Biden joined U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack for an event today celebrating the award of a \$579 million New Empowering Rural America (New ERA) grant to Dairyland Power Cooperative to accelerate the clean energy transition. State and local elected officials, renewable energy, rural advancement and education representatives also joined the Dairyland event at Vernon Electric Cooperative in Westby, Wis.

The funds will develop projects totaling 1,020 megawatts (MW) of power purchase agreements for solar and wind energy installations in Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, North Dakota and Wisconsin. Projects include 593 MW of wind, 427 MW of solar and 60 MW of energy storage.

“This is the most significant, transformative investment in electricity and electrification and clean energy for rural America since FDR’s New Deal nearly 90 years ago,” said President Biden. “That includes Dairyland Power Cooperative that will receive \$580 million to develop purchase solar power, wind power, energy storage, right here in Wisconsin.”

New ERA funding will accelerate Dairyland’s carbon profile goals, resulting in a 3.3 million metric tons carbon reduction for over 70% decrease in carbon emissions. Dairyland has already retired 579 MW of coal generation since 2014 and reduced its coal generation investment by 60% since 1999.

“One in five rural Americans will benefit from these clean energy investments, thanks to partnerships with rural electric cooperatives like Dairyland,” said Secretary Vilsack. “Put simply, this is rural power, for rural America.”

Dairyland submitted a Letter of Interest (LOI) for New ERA funding in September 2023 and received an invitation to proceed with the full application process earlier this year. The extensive portfolio of clean energy projects was cultivated to deliver significant carbon emissions reductions while supporting economic growth in Dairyland’s rural and agricultural service territories.

The award will allow Dairyland to advance clean energy transition plans more quickly and affordably. “Dairyland is honored to receive the New ERA award, which provides an incredible opportunity to accelerate deployment of renewable energy investments, facilitate economic growth and job creation, promote environmental stewardship and justice, all while lowering energy costs for rural communities,” said Dairyland President & CEO Brent Ridge.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Dairyland Power Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

New ERA projects will create career opportunities and sources of tax revenue for local communities. “Dairyland’s mission as a critical services provider in the rural Midwest is to power communities and improve the quality of life in the countryside communities we serve,” said Ridge. “We are thrilled to move forward with wind, solar and battery projects that will also yield community sustainability benefits to farmers and rural residents.”

As part of its overall sustainable power supply plan, Dairyland is exploring small modular nuclear reactors to support the increased investment in intermittent energy resources. “Nuclear will drive the transition by providing reliable, carbon-free power to support the integration of wind and solar,” noted Ridge.

**About the Empowering Rural America (New ERA) program:** Established by the Inflation Reduction Act, New ERA is a \$9.7 billion program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and invest in renewable energy. New ERA represents the largest investment in rural electrification since President Roosevelt signed the Rural Electrification Act into law in 1936. For more information, click [here](#).

**About Dairyland Power Cooperative:** Headquartered in La Crosse, Wis., Dairyland provides the wholesale electrical requirements for 24 distribution cooperatives and 27 municipal utilities. These cooperatives and municipals, in turn, supply the energy needs of approximately 700,000 people in the four-state service area. Dairyland delivers electricity via 3,300 miles of transmission lines and 233 substations located throughout the system’s 44,500 square mile service area. Visit [www.DairylandPower.com](http://www.DairylandPower.com).

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