



COLORADO
Energy Office

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Office of Gov. John Hickenlooper

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**Colorado Energy Office Releases \$750,000 in USDA Funds
to Assist Agricultural Industry**

*Funds to help finance energy- and water-saving projects for irrigators, dairies, greenhouses, nurseries
and cold storage facilities*

DENVER – March 2, 2017 – The Colorado Energy Office (CEO), in partnership with the U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service, today released \$750,000 in project assistance funds through the USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). The funding is available to Colorado agricultural irrigators, dairies, greenhouses, nurseries and cold storage facilities. **The deadline to apply is March 31.**

Applicants must be enrolled in the Colorado Agricultural Energy Efficiency program through CEO, and complete an energy audit to receive funding for projects. Interested participants can enroll in the CEO program through its [online application](#). The Colorado Agricultural Energy Efficiency program provides free energy audits and technical support to Colorado producers, along with assistance in selecting and implementing cost-effective improvements that reduce energy use, environmental impacts and operating costs.

“Working with Colorado’s agricultural partners, the Colorado Energy Office has built a turnkey approach for this important industry to achieve energy savings. The USDA funding gives program participants the ability to implement identified energy improvements and increase their profits,” said Kathleen Staks, Executive Director of CEO.

CEO was selected for a \$1.1 million USDA RCPP award to help finance energy efficiency improvements for Colorado farmers. The award is matched through a \$1.3 million cash and in-kind combined contribution from CEO, the Colorado Department of Agriculture, and utility and industry partners. The funds will help finance energy- and water-saving projects identified through CEO’s program. Over the two-year grant period, the efficiency improvements are expected to achieve more than 5,250 MWh of electricity savings and 524,000 gallons of water savings annually, and will provide additional environmental benefits to Colorado’s agricultural producers.

In 2015, CEO launched the Colorado Agricultural Energy Efficiency program to make achieving energy efficiency and renewable energy projects easy for agricultural producers. More than 100 producers have participated, and 20,000 MWh of potential electricity savings has been identified through the audits. The program will expand to 200 producers within the next two years, and it is expected to generate more than \$4.5 million in potential savings in five years.

Colorado’s agricultural industry faces direct energy expenses of more than \$400 million annually that accounts for 7 percent of the industry’s overall expenses, according to CEO’s 2013 [Colorado Agricultural Energy Market Research Report](#). The report identifies 90,000 MWh of

potential electricity savings annually, with dairies and irrigators noted as the most energy intense users with the greatest opportunity for savings.

For more information about the Colorado Agricultural Energy Efficiency program, contact Michael Turner, CEO Program Manager, at michael.a.turner@state.co.us.

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About USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Created by the 2014 Farm Bill, the USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program is a partner-driven, locally-led approach to conservation. It offers new opportunities for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service to harness innovation, welcome new partners to the conservation mission, and demonstrate the value and efficacy of voluntary, private lands conservation. Visit the website for more information:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/farmbill/rcpp/>

About Colorado Department of Agriculture

The Colorado Department of Agriculture works to strengthen and advance Colorado agriculture; promote a safe, high quality, and sustainable food supply; and protect consumers, the environment, and natural resources. See www.colorado.gov/agmain for more information.

About Colorado Energy Office

The Colorado Energy Office works to improve the effective use of all of Colorado's energy resources and the efficient consumption of energy in all economic sectors by providing technical guidance, financial support, policy advocacy and public communications. Go to www.colorado.gov/energy to learn more.