Example Outreach Email: Urge Your Co-op Board Members to set clean energy goals!

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing as an owner-member of the (insert rural co-op name). We must plan and take action now to ensure that our co-op does not miss the historic funding opportunities of Illinois' Climate and Equitable Jobs Act and the federal Inflation Reduction Act. In particular, the Empowering Rural America (New ERA) Program has made $9.7 billion available to eligible co-ops to deploy clean energy. Letters of Interest for the funding can be submitted to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) between July 31 and Aug. 31, 2023.

As an owner-member of our co-op I don't want these opportunities to pass us by, and I encourage that we take urgent action to:

1) **Set a clean energy goal**. The Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA) and the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) established clean energy generation goals for the state of Illinois, mandated energy efficiency goals for Investor-Owned Utilities (IOU), and put the Illinois Power Agency in charge of procuring energy and capacity from carbon free resources. Our co-op is not subject to the mandates placed on IOUs. We must set goals and plans for ourselves, and we should at least match the goals set for the rest of the state.
2) **Create a plan to reach that goal.** Integrated Resource Plans (IRP) are guides to evaluating our assets and our future needs. Conducting an IRP is standard practice for utilities and gives us insight into how we might use the millions of dollars made available through the USDA's New ERA Program. While we rely on Generation and Transmission Co-ops to provide us with most or all of our energy and capacity, our Board of Directors and co-op managers have a responsibility to be aware of opportunities for us to own and operate our own resources.
3) **Submit a letter of intent for the New ERA Program to obtain funding to reach our clean energy goals.** FEJA and CEJA made billions of dollars available to utilities and residents of Illinois to ensure that we are prepared for the transition to renewable energy and sector-wide electrification. Again, those laws mostly left co-ops on their own. We now have an opportunity to provide the same benefits for our co-op owners and members. The deadline to express interest is Aug. 31, 2023. I hope that the Board and management have already been exploring these funding opportunities, but if not, I ask you to do so quickly.

This funding opportunity represents the largest single investment in rural electrification since the passage of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936.

Sincerely,
(Your Name)