



Sustainable Ohio Public Energy Council
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For Immediate Release

Media Advisory

SOPEC, Rural Action awarded USDA grant to support rural small businesses develop solar assets

The Sustainable Ohio Public Energy Council (SOPEC) will host a press conference on Thursday, February 8, 2024, at 11 am at the Ohio University Innovation Center, 340 West State Street Athens, Ohio 45701, Conference Room 103. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Development State Director for Ohio will formally present the Rural Energy for America Program Technical Assistance Grant (REAP TAG) from the USDA. REAP aims to support renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvement projects for agricultural producers and rural small business owners. In addition to an official presentation of the award, the conference will include short presentations from SOPEC, Rural Action, and the USDA, with time for questions from the media.

This REAP TAG grant was awarded to SOPEC, who will be partnering with Rural Action. Together they will leverage their existing networks and programs to identify interested rural small business and agricultural producer REAP applicants. Interested applicants who qualify for a REAP grant from these programs will be offered tailored and appropriate technical assistance and grant support to help them successfully submit a strong REAP grant application for funding assistance. Additionally, SOPEC currently manages the only USDA Renewable Energy Development Assistance (REDA) solar program in the state of Ohio. The REAP TAG program will be incorporated into this program to offer REAP grant technical assistance and support for recommendations made in the solar assessment report clients receive from SOPEC's REDA program.

Speakers will include:

- Luke Sulfridge, Executive Director, Sustainable Ohio Public Energy Council
- Debbie Phillips, CEO, Rural Action
- Jonathan McCracken, Rural Development State Director for Ohio, U.S. Department of Agriculture

For additional questions, please contact Chloe Musick, Director of Public Affairs and Marketing, SOPEC at cmusick@sopec-oh.gov.