

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Joe Courtney today announced that three small farms and businesses in Hebron, Stonington, and Canterbury have secured grants totaling \$51,449 through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Energy for America Program (REAP).

REAP allows small farms and rural businesses to invest in the development and implementation of renewable energy systems so that they can save on the often volatile and rising cost of energy each year.

“These grants are smart, timely investments that will go right to the bottom lines of these small businesses in our region,” said Congressman Courtney. “I applaud Mapleleaf Farms, Stonington Vineyards, and Whispering Winds Farm for demonstrating that they have what it takes to apply some of the most creative and innovative energy solutions around to move their businesses - and our economy - forward.”

Hebron’s Mapleleaf Farms, Stonington Vineyards in Stonington, and Whispering Winds Farm of Canterbury, received \$11,449, \$20,000, and \$20,000 in funding, respectively. Grants made through REAP are awarded competitively and can be used to leverage other funding sources for a wide range of renewable energy projects at businesses producing in rural areas. Specifically, Mapeleaf and Whispering Winds will use the funds for the development of solar projects, while Stonington Vineyards will use them for energy efficiency projects.

“USDA’s REAP program plays a critical role in assisting Connecticut farmers in implementing alternative energy technologies and energy saving improvements,” said Steven K. Reviczky, Connecticut Department of Agriculture Commissioner. “These projects have a positive impact on the viability of Connecticut agriculture and serve as a necessary example that others can learn from and build on.”

The REAP program, which was funded at \$39 million last year, is funded at just \$1.3 million in the current, FY2012 Agriculture Appropriations bill, which passed the House earlier this year. Congressman Courtney opposed the bill because of deep cuts to programs like REAP, which are vital to the agricultural sector of eastern CT’s economy.

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