



## **NASEO Rural Energy Working Group Quarterly Newsletter January 2026**

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### **Upcoming NASEO Events**

- **2026 Energy Policy Outlook Conference.** February 3 – 6, 2026. The Fairmont, Washington, D.C.

The National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO) 2026 Energy Policy Outlook Conference will be held in-person on February 3-6, 2026, in Washington, DC. As states continue to navigate evolving federal energy policies and priorities, this year's meeting will include sessions focusing on the implementation of these policies and programs in this dynamic energy environment as well as in-depth discussion on ways in which state-federal coordination can address various energy system challenges such as rising power demand, reliability concerns, evolving economic and workforce needs, and increasing physical security and cybersecurity threats.

- **Virtual: [NASEO Rural Energy Working Group Webinar: Biogas 101 and State Market Potential](#).** February 18, 2026, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. ET.

Please join the NASEO Rural Energy Working Group for the third installment of the Bioenergy Webinar Series, which help State Energy Offices learn about and inform each other on the policy and incentive landscape, rural economic development and market opportunities, and energy reliability implications of bioenergy.

This session will introduce the basics of anaerobic digestion and biogas production, and how biogas offers dispatchable power for states to meet energy reliability goals. Hear from expert speakers on how State Energy Offices can support biogas market growth by strengthening feedstock supply chains, investing in energy system infrastructure, and developing supportive policies. Please register [here](#) and reach out to Jasmine Xie ([jxie@naseo.org](mailto:jxie@naseo.org)) with any questions.

*For the latest information about upcoming and past NASEO Rural Energy Working Group events, please visit the [NASEO Rural Energy Working Group Page](#).*

## In Case You Missed It

- **Virtual: Joint NASEO Transportation Committee and Rural Energy Working Group Meeting: State Policies to Enable Bioenergy and Alternative Fuels.** November 19, 2025, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. ET.

This webinar was the second installment of an educational webinar series on bioenergy through the NASEO Rural Energy Working Group, co-hosted by the NASEO Transportation Committee. This webinar featured state and industry association perspectives on low carbon fuel standards and other critical state interventions that unlock the bioenergy and alternative fuels markets to progress towards energy supply and emissions reduction targets. The presentation slides can be found [here](#) and the recording can be found [here](#).

## Announcements and Opportunities

### 2026 USDA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative NOFOs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) has two active Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs), under their Education and Workforce Development and Foundational and Applied Science competitive grant portfolios. Both programs are accepting applications between now and December 31, 2026, and will award projects that meet six legislatively authorized program priorities. One such priority is supporting foundational and applied research on biomass systems as feedstocks for biopower, biofuels, and other biobased products. Both NOFOs can be found on the [AFRI Requests for Applications website](#).

### Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy Request for Proposals on Best Practices for Landfill Methane

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) has issued a request for proposal (RFP) for a qualified contractor to develop best practices for landfill gas management in Michigan. This RFP supports EGLE's directive to inform the responsible use of landfill gas as a renewable energy source. Proposals are being accepted between January 5, and January 27, 2026, 3:00 p.m. ET. Interested vendors can access the RFP and detailed statement of work [here](#).

### New Jersey Board of Public Utilities To Open Dual-Use Solar Application Period

The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities will begin accepting program applications to their Dual-Use Solar Program from pre-qualified applicants from January 14, through February 25, 2026. More information about the program and application requirements can be found [here](#). A guidance document for farmers and landowners on engaging with and vetting prospective solar developers can be found [here](#).

### U.S. Department of Energy Announces \$134 Million Funding Opportunity to Bolster Domestic Supply Chains of Rare Earth Elements

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Critical Minerals and Energy Innovation (CMEI) today announced a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for up to \$134 million to enhance domestic supply chains for rare earth elements (REEs). Through this funding, DOE will support projects that demonstrate the commercial viability of recovering and refining REEs from unconventional feedstocks including mine tailings, e-waste, and other waste materials. These efforts will reduce America's dependence on foreign sources, strengthen national security, and promote American energy independence. Full applications must be submitted by 5:00 PM ET on January 5, 2026.

## Reports, Tools, News, and Partner Events

### [Exploring Advanced Energy Solutions for Rural Colorado](#)

The Colorado Energy Office published this report in December 2025, pursuant to directives under Colorado's House Bill 23-1247, to assess the potential for developing new, firm energy technologies in rural Colorado. This report highlights the need for innovative, dispatchable energy sources to improve energy system reliability and lower long-term electricity costs while supporting local economies impacted by Colorado's energy transition.

### [The Biogas Opportunity for Minnesota Farmers: A Business Guide for On-farm Anaerobic Digestion](#)

This guide, published in August 2025 by the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI), introduces the concept of on-farm anaerobic digestion and its specific relevance to Minnesota farmers. This guide accompanies a hybrid AURI event, the [2025 Minnesota Renewable Energy Roundtable](#), hosted in December 2025, to explore the market and energy generation potential of biogas for the state of Minnesota.

### [New Reports Highlight Importance of Oregon Lands for Climate Mitigation and Workforce Needs to Support Natural Climate Solutions](#)

Two new reports published by the Oregon Department of Energy in coordination with the Oregon Climate Action Commission highlight how Oregon's natural lands can contribute to increased carbon sequestration and how natural climate solutions can create economic opportunities for Oregon's rural workforce. More information about these reports can be found [here](#).

### [Critical Minerals Career Map](#)

This map, developed by the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Technologies Office (AMMTO), highlights different career opportunities across the domestic critical materials supply chain, including the variety of roles, essential skills, prerequisites, and average salaries. The map can be found [here](#).

### [Clean Energy Career Maps](#)

Developed by IREC, these career maps are unique, interactive tools that educators, career advisors, job seekers, employers, policymakers, and workforce professionals can use to explore the many diverse careers offered across the growing clean energy industry. This map includes careers that can retool experience from rural mining and fossil fuel roles, identifying opportunities in the clean energy sector for jobseekers of all backgrounds.

### [New Jersey Board of Public Utilities' Guidance Document for Farmers/Landowners on Dual-Use Solar](#)

A guidance document for farmers and landowners on engaging with and vetting prospective solar developers can be found [here](#). This document includes a list of questions that farmers are encouraged to ask, around compensation arrangements, site access and communications, agricultural plans, solar array design, installation, and operation of the solar site.

[Colorado Agrivoltaic Conference: Building Community & Forward Momentum](#). Denver, CO, February 19 – 20, 2026.

This in-person event welcomes solar, agriculture, and policy leaders in the Denver area to collaborate, learn, and inspire Colorado's agrivoltaics future. Members of the public are welcome to attend virtually. The registration link can be found [here](#).

### **[360 Virtual Tour of Jack's Solar Garden](#)**

This 360-degrees virtual tour of Jack's Solar Garden provides a site visit experience from the comfort of your own laptop. Representatives from the Colorado Energy Office and Colorado Department of Agriculture have both visited this educational facility, to observe the feasibility of agrivoltaics for meeting statewide energy generation goals.

*NASEO wants to highlight your news and success stories. Please share upcoming events, announcements, publications, and relevant news stories, to feature in the next Rural Energy Working Group Quarterly Newsletter. More resources and opportunities can be found on NASEO's [Rural Energy](#) page. You may direct any submissions or feedback to Jasmine Xie ([jxie@naseo.org](mailto:jxie@naseo.org)).*