

The Regional Energy Hubs Act of 2026
Office of Rep. Paul Tonko (NY-20)
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Background

Despite the availability of numerous local, State, and Federal energy and energy efficiency programs, including those focused on energy affordability and energy workforce development, a lack of awareness, confusion, and misinformation often prevents Americans from taking full advantage of these opportunities. This can result in making ill-informed decisions and losing out on tremendous utility bill savings. While energy efficiency programs have already saved Americans hundreds of billions of dollars in reduced utility bills, experts estimate that billions more are left on the table every year in potential savings.

The Regional Energy Hubs Act tackles these problems by leveraging partnerships of community-based organizations to connect Americans to relevant programs, resources, and incentives through local outreach and education. Modeled after the Cooperative Extension Service, a program that has successfully disseminated information and promoted the adoption of new agricultural practices for over one hundred years, regional energy hubs will be a one-stop resource for their communities. Through their regional energy hub, Americans will have a local, trusted resource where they can learn about relevant energy programs and incentives, educational and job training opportunities, and connect with qualified local professionals to perform energy audits and install energy efficiency measures. The Regional Energy Hubs Act will further enable Americans to save money, improve energy security, and make better informed energy decisions.

Section-by-Section Summary

Section 1 establishes the short title for the bill.

Section 2 amends part D of title III of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act by adding a new Section 367 to create the Regional Energy Hubs Program and by amending Section 365(f) to authorize \$50 million annually for Fiscal Years 2027 through 2031 for the program.

Section 367 includes the following:

Subsection (a) requires the Secretary of Energy to provide financial assistance upon request to States and Tribal Governments to establish regional energy hubs.

Subsection (b) establishes the Regional Energy Hubs Program, through which States and Tribal Governments can receive financial assistance to create one or more regional energy hub. Hubs will leverage multidisciplinary partnerships of local organizations to promote adoption of and access to energy and energy efficiency programs, incentives, and resources. Hubs must be

geographically distributed to ensure equitable access by disadvantaged and underserved communities.

Subsection (c) establishes the responsibilities of the regional energy hub, which include raising awareness of energy and energy efficiency programs, analyzing and addressing regional barriers to accessing such opportunities, and promoting energy workforce development, among others.

Subsection (d) establishes the organizational structure of the regional energy hubs, which shall consist of several partner organizations with collective expertise in energy, community development, and educational activities working together to fulfill program responsibilities.

Subsection (e) requires each hub to be led by a community-based organization located within the region that has demonstrated the capabilities, partnerships, and administrative capacity needed to carry out hub responsibilities. This lead organization will be responsible for coordination of partner organizations, administration and management of the hub, and meeting data collection and reporting requirements.

Subsection (f) establishes annual reporting requirements for the hubs, which shall include descriptions of partnerships, activities, and other information needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the hubs.

Subsection (g) establishes an advisory committee consisting of relevant stakeholders to provide recommendations on the establishment, operation, and improvement of the hubs.

Subsection (h) directs the Secretary to coordinate with relevant Federal agencies and State and local governments that carry out programs relevant to the hubs' responsibilities. The Secretary is also directed to advise and, to the extent possible, reduce barriers to hubs leveraging and combining funding from various sources to better enable the hubs to fulfill their responsibilities.

Subsection (i) instructs the Secretary to allocate funding to States in accordance with the formula used to distribute financial assistance to States through the State Energy Program. The Secretary is also required to set aside and distribute not less than 5% of the amounts made available to provide financial assistance to Tribal Governments.

Subsection (j) includes definitions for "community-based organization" and "Indian tribe."