

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today Congressman John W. Olver announced that United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development has awarded Hall Tavern Farm in Shelburne Falls a \$43,063 Rural Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvement grant. The funds will be used to purchase and install an 18 kilowatt solar photovoltaic renewable energy production facility.

Congressman John Olver said, "I am very pleased to hear that the USDA has awarded this grant to Hall Tavern Farm. I understand that this system will provide 96% of the saw mill's energy, enabling Hall Tavern to not only reduce future energy costs, but also reduce its reliance on the electrical grid. This project is another example of how renewable energy systems can be not only beneficial to the environment, but also to a business' bottom line." "It's great to see this kind of investment being made in western Massachusetts," State Senator Stan Rosenberg (D-Amherst) said. "Innovative technology like this will help us address two of our most pressing needs – sustainable economic development and environmental preservation."

"Many thanks to Congressmen Olver, Senator Rosenberg and local legislators for supporting Hall Tavern's grant to USDA for construction of photovoltaic panels on our south-facing sawbarn roof. The future of many of our local farms will be determined by our ability to lower our utility costs, costs which usually much more than those of our competitors. This USDA grant, in combination with state alternative energy construction incentives, will make solar installation feasible and greatly help our farm become energy independent. We can't wait to see the meter spin backward," said Jay Healy, manager of Hall Tavern Farm.

USDA's Rural Development Section 9006 Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements program provides financial assistance to agricultural producers and small rural businesses to support renewable energy projects. This grant was one of 639 in 43 states that will receive a total of \$35 million in grants and loan guarantees.

Hall Tavern Farm, the State's oldest privately owned Tree Farm, sustainably harvests trees and turns them into a variety of green certified building materials.

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