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ABC Praises House Introduction of the Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Act (H.R. 3744)

July 17 - Washington, DC - The American Biogas Council, the trade association for the U.S. biogas industry, praises the recent reintroduction of the [Agricultural Environmental Stewardship Act \(H.R. 3744\)](#). The bill was introduced on July 12, 2019 by Congressmen Ron Kind (D-WI-3) and Tom Reed (R-NY-23).

The bill will increase agricultural viability by helping to deploy new nutrient recovery and biogas systems that recycle organic material into baseload renewable energy and healthy soil products. The Act provides a 30 percent investment tax credit (ITC) for qualifying biogas and nutrient recovery systems.

“The Agricultural Environmental Stewardship Act is a boost to on-farm economies and watershed protection everywhere. When biogas systems recycle manure and its nutrients, we have cleaner waterways and healthier soil,” said Patrick Serfass, Executive Director of the American Biogas Council (ABC). “This bill that Congressmen Ron Kind and Tom Reed have introduced incentivizes private investment in digester and nutrient recovery technologies which will create new jobs and protect our air, water and soil.”

Currently, there are no tax incentives to encourage biogas or nutrient recovery systems. A previous production tax credit under section 45 of the federal tax code which promoted the use of renewable electricity expired at the end of 2017. This new credit would promote the production of pipeline quality natural gas and compressed renewable natural gas vehicle fuel as well as nutrients which are essential to agricultural production.

Why is nutrient recycling important?

To have both healthy watersheds and soils, sustainable agricultural practices are critical. When excessive amounts of nutrients are applied to soils within the short window available between planting crops and crop growth, the crops don't absorb the nutrients. Consequently, those nutrients often run into waterways especially during heavy rains that often occur in spring and fall. In water, excess nutrients can create harmful algal blooms that starve fish and desirable aquatic plants of the oxygen they need to thrive. By deploying nutrient recovery systems that allow farms to apply nutrients when and where they are needed throughout the year, farms greatly reduce the potential environmental impact and the use of expensive chemical fertilizers which are often imported and can make sure that just the right mix of critical nutrients are applied to their soils.

Connection between nutrient recovery and biogas systems

While some nutrient recovery systems can process raw manure instead of digested manure, their performance is enhanced technically and economically when processing digested manure in tandem with a biogas system. [Biogas systems](#) transform manure and other organic residuals like food waste using a natural, microbial process (not too different from what happens in a cow's stomach) producing a digestate containing all of the nutrients but in more bioavailable forms. Since the digested material is already warm, homogeneous and broken down as it leaves the biogas system, nutrient separation is more efficient and the reliability of separating or concentrating the nutrients from the digestate is increased. This allows farmers and landscapers greater control of how much of each nutrient (e.g., nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium) they apply to the soil.

U.S. Biogas Market

Currently, the United States has more than [2,200 sites producing biogas](#), and still, the potential for growth of the U.S. biogas industry is huge. We count over 13,500 new sites ripe for development today. If fully realized, these new biogas systems could produce enough energy to power 7.5 million American homes and reduce emissions equivalent to removing up to 15.4 million passenger vehicles from the road. It would also result in an estimated \$40 billion in capital deployment for construction activity which would result in approximately 335,000 short-term construction jobs and 23,000 permanent jobs to build and run the digesters.

For more about how biogas systems work, visit:

<https://americanbiogascouncil.org/resources/how-biogas-systems-work>

About the American Biogas Council

The American Biogas Council is the only national trade association representing the entire biogas industry in the U.S. We represent over 200 companies in all parts of the biogas supply chain who are dedicated to maximizing the production and use of biogas from organic waste. Biogas systems protect our air, water and soil by recycling organic material, like food waste and manure, into renewable energy and soil products. Learn more online at www.AmericanBiogasCouncil.org, Twitter [@ambiogascouncil](#), [LinkedIn](#) and on [YouTube](#)