

LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

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April 23, 2015

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Re: Energy Answer and Request to RUS

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

I write to express my concern regarding the prospect of the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Utility Services (RUS) providing financial aid to Energy Answer Arcibo, LLC (EA) for what EA describes as a “renewable energy project” in Arcibo, Puerto Rico. The potential project would result in the burning of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) in order to produce energy. I would also like to request a meeting with you to discuss the same.

Given the possible negative environmental repercussions which can occur with the burning of Municipal Solid Waste, I ask that the agency provide me responses in writing to the following:

1. How is providing funding for this project consistent with the mission of RUS?
2. On what grounds does RUS consider this a “renewable energy” project?
3. The burning of trash is known to cause serious environmental and health problems in surrounding communities; please explain how this project avoids such problems.
4. Given how heavily populated Arcibo is, please explain how this location is considered by RUS to be rural.
5. How much CO2 will the incinerator emit each year and how will this impact climate change?
6. The specific grounds upon which RUS considers the EA project as one of “electrification” and the need for greater electric production capacity in Arcibo.
7. Please share copies of any preliminary engineering or environmental evaluation carried out by RUS in relation to the project.
8. What is the amount of federal financial aid being requested by Energy Answers for the Arcibo project as well as their other projects in the United States, if any?
9. Information on whether RUS has previously awarded financial aid for a MSW incineration-based project in the United States.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns and for your responses to the above items. To schedule a meeting please contact Julissa Santoy or my office at 202-225-8203.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Luis V. Gutiérrez". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Luis V. Gutiérrez
Member of Congress