

Oil Overcharge Funds Available For State Ag Energy Projects

WASHINGTON, D.C.— National Council of Farmer Cooperatives President Wayne A. Boutwell today announced the release of a final report intended to assist ag leaders in seeking agriculture's "fair share" of energy-related projects being funded by the states out of \$4.2 billion received from oil overcharge refunds. These funds are available to the states as a result of legal proceedings involving refunds for crude oil overcharges by U.S. oil companies during the 1973-1981 era of oil price controls.

"This program represents a tremendous opportunity for agricul-

tural leaders at the local level to help secure funding for energy-related projects beneficial to American farmers," the co-op leader declared. "Our analysis suggests that more than \$400 million should go to agricultural programs."

States are required to spend the oil overcharge refunds on energy conservation programs which will benefit consumer groups, including agriculture, in rough proportion to various sectors' petroleum use. "The states have committed about \$1 billion overall to energy projects so far and, with a few exceptions, agriculture has been

left out," Boutwell added. "I am concerned that this trend will continue unless local ag leaders speak out."

The National Council's Energy Policy Committee (EPC) prepared the reports in the hope that by alerting members of the agricultural community, and by providing them with state-level contacts and procedural guidelines, more energy projects benefiting agriculture would receive funds. "The response has been encouraging in those few states where agricultural spokesmen have become involved in the process," EPC chairman Terry Ragsdale (Southern States

Cooperative) observed. "Although it is easy to be intimidated by all the 'legaleze' surrounding this issue," he added, "it is clear that a fair share of these state expenditures ought to go to agricultural programs."

The five-part report, entitled, "A Fair Share for Agriculture in the Distribution of State Oil Overcharge Recovery Funds," is available from the National Council by request. Farmer-owned cooperatives contributing financial and technical support necessary for

preparation of this fair share report are: Agway Inc. (Syracuse, NY); CENEX (St. Paul, MN); Farmland Industries, Inc. (Kansas City, MO); GROWMARK, Inc. (Bloomington, IL); Southern Farmers Association (N. Little Rock, AR); and Southern States Cooperative, Inc. (Richmond, VA).

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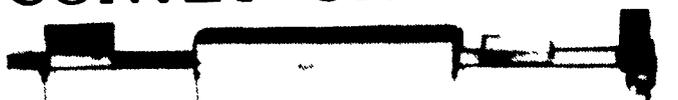
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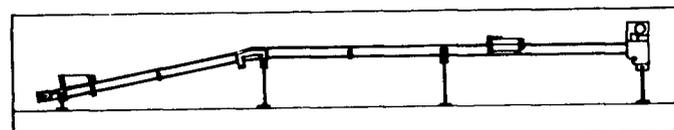
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