Today, Nebraska's Senator Ben Nelson welcomed an announcement by the U.S. Department of Energy that Nebraska will receive nearly $10 million to fund energy efficiency and conservation projects across the state.

The funding is part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

"These stimulus funds will create jobs in Nebraska," said Nelson. "The projects supported by these funds will create or retain jobs in this difficult economic time while saving Nebraskans on energy costs in the future."

The award is part of the Department of Energy's Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program, which supports state-level energy efficiency priorities, along with funding local conservation projects in smaller cities and counties.

The EECBG program was funded for the first time by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Nebraska's State Energy Office will receive $9,593,500; Dakota County will receive $87,300; the City of Kearney will receive $131,100; the City of North Platte will receive $105,300; and the City of Papillion will receive $91,300.

According to the Department of Energy, Nebraska will use its Recovery Act EECBG funding to improve lighting efficiency, complete building retrofits, and expand renewable energy in the state.

These projects will lead to substantial energy and cost savings, and create or retain more than 100 jobs statewide.

Nebraska has set aggressive goals to improve energy efficiency and is targeting those projects that it believes will result in maximum energy savings.

Sixty percent of the funds Nebraska receives today will be passed along to local governments.

Nearly 583 cities and counties will be eligible to apply for these sub-grants, and awardees will be selected through a competitive process.

Priority will be given to projects that meet the identified energy efficiency needs of the state's 93 counties and nearly 500 towns eligible for grants and will maximize benefits statewide.

Senator Nelson played a key role in the passage of the $787 billion stimulus bill.

He worked with a bipartisan group of nearly 20 Senators to better focus The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act on tax cuts for the middle class and job creation for millions of Americans.

Senator Nelson led the group through the initial bill line by line, dollar by dollar, to reduce spending and cut out $108 billion of inefficient or less-stimulative spending.

The bipartisan group helped the improved bill win congressional approval.

President Obama signed it into law February 17, 2009.