



April 17, 2018

The Honorable Michael Conaway
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Agriculture
2430 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Agriculture
2204 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Conaway and Ranking Member Peterson:

The Campaign for Renewed Rural Development (CRRD) is a coalition of national policy advocacy organizations representing a broad spectrum of interests focused on rural issues. The CRRD unites around the need for a robust Rural Development Title within the farm bill that provides critical investments to some of our nation's most underserved communities and enhances rural America's competitiveness in a global marketplace.

We are encouraged to see the House Committee on Agriculture's draft of the "Agriculture & Nutrition Act of 2018" includes many new provisions under the Rural Development Title. Specifically, we are pleased to see the committee is committed to addressing many key issues facing rural communities including combating critical health crises, bridging the digital divide, and increasing access to capital.

While we are excited to see initial steps taken towards the reauthorization of our next farm bill, we are discouraged by the elimination of mandatory funding for the Rural Development Title's most critical programs. Today, rural communities across the country are struggling with increasing health disparities, the opioid epidemic, a digital divide and recovering economically from the last recession. Mandatory funding for these critical rural development programs are needed now more than ever.

As Congress continues to work on a new farm bill, we ask for bipartisan support for rural communities through a robust Rural Development Title that promotes economic growth and stability by investing in our nation's rural infrastructure, incentivizing regional collaboration and ensuring the success of our next generation of farmers. Recognizing the tight budget environment, we urge the Committee to find those opportunities to deliver these critically important tools to rural America as you work through the remainder of the farm bill process.

We appreciate your continued leadership and support and stand ready to leverage the shared goals of the undersigned organizations to pass a flexible and fully funded Rural Development Title in the next farm bill.

Sincerely,

Center for Rural Affairs
Fahe
Fair Food Network
Housing Assistance Council
National Association of Counties

National Association of Development Organizations
National Association of Regional Councils
National Association of Towns and Townships
National League of Cities
Rural Community Assistance Partnership, Inc.