

# Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

## TITLE VI - RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Senate Republican Farm Bill Framework for Title VI is a direct response to the economic development challenges faced by rural communities due to a lack of critical infrastructure including clean drinking water, broadband connectivity, reliable and affordable energy or basic access to healthcare and childcare services. By prioritizing significant and meaningful investments toward rural development programs we can ensure that rural communities across America are able to retain population and thrive.

- Provides significant **new mandatory funding** to fund critical water infrastructure and community facilities in rural communities.
- Prioritizes **increased access to healthcare and childcare** in rural America through a suite of programs including the Community Facilities, Business & Industry Loan Guarantee, Rural Business Development Grant and Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance programs.
- Continues current mandatory investments of to support **rural development loans and grants**.
- Increases **Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance program loans** to \$75,000.
- Makes permanent the **ReConnect Program** and targets funding to **communities most in need**, increases build out speeds and improves coordination among states and federal agencies who manage broadband deployment programs to prevent overbuilding and protect taxpayer resources.
- Meets the rising need of **connectivity on farmland and ranchland** to enable adoption of **precision agriculture technologies**.
- Stands up a new **cybersecurity circuit rider program** to defend rural water and wastewater systems against cyber threats.
- Enables eligible, high-functioning water systems to **aid separate water systems** in securing funding, enabling **improved operations of water and wastewater facilities**.
- Increases access to capital by equipping USDA with **new and affordable financing authorities** including **1% and 0% interest loans targeted to low-income communities**.
- Reauthorizes the **Rural Decentralized Water Systems Program** and increases the maximum subgrant or loan amount to \$25,000, allows subgrant funding to include the cost of a performance warranty for an individually owned household's decentralized wastewater system and increases resources for technical assistance.
- Authorizes federal grants for water quality testing and aids the purchase, installation and maintenance of water filtration systems in order **to safeguard against harmful contaminants found in drinking water** of rural communities with **persistent water challenges**.
- Establishes a **new, flexible-use capacity building program** to provide multi-year awards for intermediaries to aide rural communities in assessing their economic development goals, identifying potential federal funding opportunities and navigating program application processes.

