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BROADBAND FOR RURAL AMERICA ACT **A BLUEPRINT FOR A BETTER-CONNECTED AMERICA**

OVERVIEW

Reliable connectivity is essential to our communities and a 21st-century economy. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it abundantly clear just how much households and businesses rely on this technology, and it has shown the detriments of spotty Internet service. Where broadband is lacking is often referred to as the "digital divide," and **nowhere in the nation is the digital divide starker than in rural America.**

THE BROADBAND FOR RURAL AMERICA ACT

- Authorizes **\$3.7 billion per year for critical rural broadband programs**, including the ReConnect Rural Broadband Program, the Middle Mile Broadband Program, and the Innovative Broadband Advancement Program.
- Eliminates duplicative programs by **codifying the popular ReConnect program**.
- Builds on the successes of ReConnect by:
 - establishing **25/3 Mbps connections** as the threshold for minimum broadband service, and;
 - imposing rigorous new buildout requirements to ensure that broadband networks financed through USDA **meet the long-term needs of rural residents**.
- Targets limited resources so assistance is **focused on the most rural and least-connected residents**, which are often the most expensive to connect.
- Promotes borrower accountability and **protects taxpayers** with new tools to ensure promised services are delivered to rural communities.
- Expands **investment in "middle mile networks,"** an essential, but often overlooked, component of Internet connectivity for many rural communities that connects local networks in one region to the Internet backbone.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Discussions surrounding infrastructure are too often limited to our roads, bridges, and waterways, but in a 21st-century economy, broadband infrastructure must be at the heart of our efforts. **By continuing to invest in broadband, we can empower farm families, better serve rural America, and fuel global economies.**

SUPPORTING RURAL COMMUNITIES

- Rural broadband is desperately needed in both the farmhouse and in the field.
- Agriculture is science, technology, and innovation, and broadband is critical to meeting the demands of each.
- Rural communities must be equipped with necessary tools like broadband to rebound into a resurgent post-COVID economy.

SHATTERING LIMITATIONS TO POTENTIAL

- With investments in broadband connectivity, we can unleash the power of American ingenuity.
- There's no telling what we are capable of with a better-connected America.
- By continuing to invest in broadband, we can empower farm families, better serve rural America, and fuel global economies.

SHAPING THE NEXT GENERATION

- Rural America is a great place to plant roots, start a business, and raise a family, but repopulating rural America is impossible without reliable, high-speed connectivity.
- We need to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars and make targeted investments in broadband infrastructure that will withstand the tests of time.
- Funding broadband projects is not just an infrastructure investment—it's a direct investment in the next generation.