



UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON
**AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,
& FORESTRY**

U.S. SENATOR DEBBIE STABENOW, CHAIRWOMAN

Rural Development

The Farm Bill is where we invest in *keeping rural communities strong*. Americans deserve access to good paying jobs, quality healthcare, and modern infrastructure no matter where they live. The Rural Prosperity and Food Security Act improves quality of life for rural families by upgrading childcare and health care facilities, growing the rural economy, and bridging the digital divide. The bill removes paperwork barriers and makes it easier for rural leaders to navigate federal programs.

Rural Communities and Rural Families:

The bill improves quality of life for rural families by improving **rural health care, including elder care facilities, mental and behavioral health centers, and schools** by providing new flexibilities in existing USDA RD programs.

The bill also takes a new, comprehensive approach to address **rural childcare** needs by prioritizing projects that address the availability, quality, and cost of childcare in rural communities.

Rural communities have long faced higher barriers in accessing existing federal funds. Unlike their urban neighbors, rural leaders often lack funding and staffing resources to navigate the overlapping challenges of competing for federal funds. The bill equips rural communities to lead public-private partnerships through a new Rural Partnership Program and builds on the success of the Biden Administration's Rural Partners Network.

This bill **creates baseline funding for Rural Development for the first time in history**, providing \$50 million per year for the Rural Partnership Program.

Rural Jobs:

The bill invests in growing the middle class and creating good-paying jobs in rural America by supporting manufacturing, entrepreneurship, small businesses, and rural cooperatives. It streamlines the application process to access federal programs

that support rural jobs like Rural Cooperative Business Development Grants and Rural Business Development Grants.

The bill supports and grows local and regional food systems through a **new Food Supply Chain Guaranteed Loan and Grant program**, increasing access to local products from local farmers to keep money in the local economy.

Rural Infrastructure:

The bill **expands access to high-speed internet** by strengthening the popular and bipartisan ReConnect Program. For students, business owners, farmers, and families, high-speed internet is a necessity to create jobs and improve access to education.

The bill provides **mandatory funding for water and essential community facilities**.

The bill makes critical investments in public water and wastewater systems that rural communities across the country rely on, and it **addresses emerging contaminants like PFAS** by improving popular, bipartisan programs.

It lowers capital match requirements, increases tribal eligibility, targets high-need communities, and improves lending programs to help rural communities improve and repair critical water infrastructure.

The bill provides support for low-and moderate-income households to install or upgrade their water well and wastewater systems, ensuring that they are safe and reliable, and provides support to families that currently lack adequate septic systems or running water.