

## NRECA Farm Bill Conference Priorities

- **Rural Electrification Act (REA) – NRECA supports the House position and opposes the Senate Cushion of Credit provisions**

Not-for-profit electric cooperatives depend on the USDA Rural Utilities Service Electric Loan Program to serve the most rural, hardest-to-serve areas of the country. The Senate bill contains detrimental language that would cut this essential program, increasing electricity costs for rural consumers. The House bill does not contain this harmful provision.

- **Broadband – NRECA supports the House provisions**

Deployment of broadband is essential to keeping rural communities competitive in the twenty-first century. While both bills contain new broadband programs, the House bill best reflects our goals for the final conference report:

- Make a significant financial investment toward deploying broadband in rural America.
- Create a new grant funding component and reward projects that serve low density areas.
- Be forward-looking on broadband quality so new projects stand the test of time.
- Maximize efficiency by leveraging other government dollars, like the RUS electric loan program.
- Give RUS broad latitude to deploy funds to capable providers.

- **Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program (REDLG) – NRECA supports the Senate provision**

Electric cooperatives utilize the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program to finance basic economic development projects to grow jobs in the communities they serve. Both the House and Senate bills reauthorize and positively reform the program. The Senate bill contains some mandatory funding.

- **Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) – NRECA supports the Senate provision**

The REAP program helps electric cooperatives finance the deployment of renewable and other innovative energy technologies. While both the House and Senate reauthorize the program, the Senate bill maintains the mandatory funding currently available for the program.

- **Guaranteed Underwriter Program (GUP) – Both bills contain favorable language**

The Guaranteed Underwriter Program assists cooperative banks in providing needed financing to electric cooperatives for infrastructure improvements. Both the House and Senate bills contain technical reforms that would make the program easier to access and ensure a reliable financing option for electric cooperatives. The Senate bill provides additional program flexibility.

- **Rural Energy Savings Program (RESP) – Both bills contain favorable language**

The Rural Energy Savings Program facilitates the deployment of energy efficiency technologies including home energy retrofits that save consumers and co-ops money. Both the House and Senate contain language to reauthorize and improve the program. The Senate bill also contains additional reforms.

- **Rural Cooperative Development Program (RCDG) – *Both bills contain favorable language***

The Rural Cooperative Development Program fosters economic development by helping to promote the cooperative solutions to rural economic problems. Both bills reauthorize this program.

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