



# REBUILD RURAL

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## ENERGY

Providing safe, affordable, reliable electricity to rural communities faces many challenges. In particular, the lack of population density requires more infrastructure and can increase the cost of electrifying vast areas of the country. The original movement to bring electricity to rural Americans, led by electric cooperatives in the 1930s and 1940s, continues today. And to help keep the costs affordable, electric providers rely on assistance from the Rural Utilities Service (RUS).

RUS loans have helped build, expand and improve the infrastructure across rural America to provide power and other services. It has been among the most successful public-private infrastructure investment programs in the history of the country. RUS loans help rural electric utilities reduce costs and improve reliability by financing construction and maintenance of basic assets like poles and wires.

As the RUS programs evolve, the agency has kept them flexible and efficient, including recent reforms to streamline the loan application process. The Rebuild Rural Coalition urges RUS to continue to evaluate ways to be as responsive as possible to borrowers' needs.

Whether financed through RUS, other public sources or private lenders, continued infrastructure investment is essential to making our systems more resilient, modern, efficient and secure. For example, as generation sources become more diverse and widely distributed, we must continue to modernize the transmission grid to ensure reliability and the ability to connect new types of generation resources. Similarly, as we build out

infrastructure to accommodate electric vehicles and other new technology, we must ensure that we are meeting the unique demands of rural areas and the electric cooperatives that serve them.

In the 21st century, connectivity is just as essential to the electric grid as traditional generation, transmission and distribution hardware. RUS Smart Grid loans help facilitate the deployment of robust communications infrastructure to modernize the grid, improve efficiency to save money and protect against cyberattack. The Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program finances economic development projects that add jobs to rural communities. The Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Loan Program (EECLP) and the Rural Energy Savings Program (RESP) encourage the deployment of renewable and energy efficiency technologies into rural areas to help residents save money. Rebuild Rural recommends additional investment into these programs.

And decreasing regulatory burdens for electric utilities in rural areas would help strengthen their ability to generate, transmit and distribute reliable, cost-effective electricity to customers. Rebuild Rural supports reforms to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Endangered Species Act (ESA) to promote the development of rural infrastructure. In addition, streamlining federal government management practices on federal lands will better enable electric cooperatives to maintain safety and reliability by performing needed vegetation management to prevent threats to power lines and respond to emergencies.

**REBUILD RURAL COALITION**

50 F Street, NW, Suite 900 · Washington, DC 20001 · 202.626.8710

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