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COMMITTEE ON
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
April 4, 2019

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
FDA and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
FDA and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Fortenberry:

As you consider Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 appropriations, I request level funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Telecommunications Infrastructure Loan Program.

Broadband internet access is critical to the well-being of rural communities like those in Wisconsin's 7th Congressional District. These areas, oftentimes overlooked by larger internet service providers, still require internet connectivity to help area residents raise families, grow businesses, and stay interconnected.

The benefits of broadband in these communities cannot be overstated. Internet access enables doctors to consult with patients remotely, businesses to engage with customers in a global marketplace, and for Wisconsin dairy farmers to produce more efficiently.

Despite the obvious benefits of internet access, the Federal Communications Commission reports that broadband deployment in rural areas still lags behind urban areas. One barrier to rural broadband, often cited by telecommunications providers, is the steep cost of deploying broadband service in rural areas because there are too few customers to support that investment.

That's why it's so critical that federal investments in rural broadband continue, so that we may assist in the buildout of these networks. If we are to ensure that rural areas have the support they need to continue to grow, then we must continue to support the creation of new and better broadband infrastructure in these areas.

To help with that effort, I request level funding in FY2020 for the Telecommunications Infrastructure Loan Program. I appreciate the Committee's past support of rural broadband programs and thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Sean P. Duffy
Member of Congress

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