

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 8, 2024

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair, Committee Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Vice Chair Collins:

As Congress considers the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Appropriations Bill for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, we request that you robustly fund standard, non-Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) grants for the Community Facilities Program and the Water and Waste Disposal Program at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development (RD) Office. Specifically, we ask that this funding be returned to FY22 levels at \$40 million for Community Facilities grants and \$490 million for Water and Waste Disposal grants. These programs are deeply impactful to our rural communities.

RD is an essential partner for rural America. As costs increase in rural towns, RD helps mitigate those burdens by providing low-interest capital and grants. The Community Facilities Program and Water and Waste Disposal Program provide support for building and improving public infrastructure—key to mitigating costs for towns. Robust standard grant funding for these programs ensures that our rural communities have the resources they need to thrive.

As you know, the majority of Community Facilities Program and Water and Waste Disposal Program funding in FY24 was allocated for Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS), which are referred to as Community Funding Projects in the House.

We support CDS projects as they are an important part of our appropriations process and are vital for our communities. We strongly support funding CDS projects through Rural Development programs. But we must also protect and increase standard grant funding for these programs to ensure their long-term viability. Without the standard funding, RD will not be able to fund grants for eligible communities—leaving these critical projects on the table.

Furthermore, projects funded from the standard side of these two programs must meet median income requirements and rural definition requirements, meaning they tend to go to communities most in need of support. Congress has a responsibility to maintain strong standard grant funding levels for these programs so they can be a reliable resource to rural communities. Therefore, we request that the standard grant levels be returned to FY22 enacted amounts at \$40 million for Community Facilities grants, an increase of \$35 million from FY24, and \$490 million for water and waste disposal grants, an increase of \$235 million from FY24.

We appreciate your consideration of our request and your support for rural America.

Sincerely,



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator