



Rural Recovery Act of 2025

Introduced By: Senators Peter Welch (D-Vt.); Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.); Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.)

Background:

After a natural disaster, the first step to recovery is identifying damage, planning, and applying for assistance. However, rural town governments often lack the experience or capacity to carry out this work and deal with the dozens of federal agencies that are involved in the recovery process.

Legislation:

The *Rural Recovery Act* would create a program at U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development (RD) to provide RD state offices with funding to administer emergency recovery technical assistance following presidentially-declared disasters in their jurisdiction.

Through the *Rural Recovery Act*, RD state offices would automatically receive funding, which they would be permitted to administer internally or contract out. Both the RD offices and their contractors would be considered TA providers under this bill. TA providers could then assist rural communities in navigating the disaster process with federal agencies, including EDA, FEMA, and RD itself. They could also support rural communities in preparing applications to benefit any type of disaster impacted infrastructure.

Funding would be available to RD state offices three years after the disaster occurs and would grant the Secretary of Agriculture an option to extend availability for another three years on a case-by-case basis. The funding formula for grants would be based on population, which the bill sets at any area with fewer than 20,000 people. The Secretary of Agriculture could alter the definition of rural for this program at their discretion.