



**Campaign for a  
Renewed Rural  
Development**

December 4, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
Office of the Speaker  
H-232 United States Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
Office of the Majority Leader  
S-321 United States Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boehner  
Minority Leader  
Office of the House Republican Leader  
H-204 United States Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
Office of the Minority Leader  
S-230 United States Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader Boehner, and Minority Leader McConnell:

The Campaign for a Renewed Rural Development urges you to include ready-to-go USDA Rural Development projects in any pending economic stimulus package. The Campaign is a collaboration of national organizations with a strong interest in the sustainability and prosperity of small town and rural America.

There are many important stimulus needs that our organizations have expressed individually, but one area of significant agreement is the importance and effectiveness of including funding for rural development programs, especially the backlog of water and wastewater infrastructure projects, in any economic stimulus bill. Other critical USDA Rural Development programs such as essential rural community facilities, distance learning and telemedicine infrastructure and business development programs will also provide an important stimulus to our nation's economy.

Our nation's rural communities own and operate wastewater and storm water infrastructure that provides vital economic, public health and environmental benefits to American communities and the national economy, and we believe substantial funding should be provided for these important facilities. The 2008 Farm Bill provided some funding for this purpose, but the backlog within USDA Rural Development remains. In fact, hundreds of rural communities are waiting for funding on the longstanding \$3 billion backlog list of approved applications for clean water and waste disposal projects.

Significant funding for this backlog will provide an immediate infrastructure stimulus, green jobs in hundreds of rural communities, and public health improvements. In addition, the USDA process is the fastest federal program in moving water projects to construction. The agency estimates that \$1 billion in backlog funding could create up to 23,000 related jobs, greatly improve public health, promote community-based economic development, and, in some cases, allow rural families to receive piped-water for the first time. We recommend providing at least \$2 billion to this critical stimulus vehicle.



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Our rural communities stand ready to play a key role in our nation's economic recovery efforts. One key method of including rural America in this effort is through funding the key USDA Rural Development programs outlined above which have a track record of quickly infusing capital in ready-to-go projects.

Sincerely,

Colleen Landkamer  
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