

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

October 25, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition, and Forestry

The Honorable David Scott
Chairman
House Agriculture Committee

Dear Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Chairwoman Stabenow, and
Chairman Scott,

As you consider historic legislation to invest in American families and rebuild our nation's economy, we write to urge you to provide investments for rural communities and small towns through the establishment of a new Rural Partnership Program (RPP) in the Build Back Better plan.

The Rural Partnership Program will establish a new national partnership model to support local rural development efforts. It will provide crucial funding for our nation's rural communities through flexible, responsive, and long-term investment and assistance for rural development efforts. Funding for these multi-year, flexible block grants will enable rural communities to transition to the new economy and create well-paying and fulfilling jobs for rural Americans where they live.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacted a toll on rural economies nationwide. The pandemic stalled ongoing economic development efforts, strained rural health care systems, and exposed conspicuous investment deficiencies in rural infrastructure, from broadband to accessible transportation. As such, the Rural Partnership Program presents a pressing opportunity to provide both a source of recovery assistance designed specifically for rural communities, and a long-term investment in the future of rural economies.

We recognize there are many critical priorities under consideration in the Build Back Better plan. Robust, long-term investments in rural communities to augment ongoing recovery efforts must also be a priority for this plan.

The Rural Partnership Program will provide a crucial lifeline for capacity-building in rural communities to access necessary federal resources that will both address the unprecedented financial challenges they are facing, and set the foundations for future economic development.

We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,



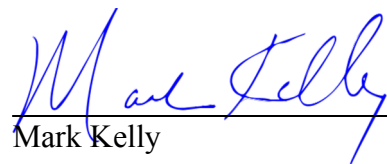
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Raphael G. Warnock
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
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