

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Minority Leader Pelosi:

We are writing to urge you to include a provision addressing a rural housing problem in any upcoming legislation the House considers prior to September 30, 2012. We have enclosed proposed language that could be used in the upcoming continuing resolution (CR) as well as future omnibus appropriations packages, which would resolve this issue for the next fiscal year and thus enable us to develop a long-term approach.

This important issue affects hundreds of rural communities throughout the United States. Unless action is taken by September 30, 2012, 923 communities will no longer be eligible for funding under critical U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development programs.

In 2000, Congress enacted a grandfather clause that allowed any community that was "rural" in 1990 to continue to be eligible for USDA Rural Development funding until the 2010 Census, as long as it had a population below 25,000. This grandfather clause will expire on October 1, 2012, and under the new definition, 923 communities currently eligible for USDA Rural Development programs will be cut off from what is often their only source of federal housing funding. To be eligible after October 1, 2012, these communities must fall within the original—and very restrictive—definition.

We continue to work with many of our colleagues to extend the current grandfather clause. During its consideration of the Farm Bill, the Senate passed by voice vote an amendment to continue the grandfather clause for ten years for those communities eligible for USDA rural housing programs. The provision also increased the population cap on communities previously eligible to 35,000. Due to jurisdictional issues, we were unable to consider such a provision during the House Agriculture Committee markup of the bill, but hope to address the issue during conference. In addition, we continue to promote H.R. 273, the *Rural Housing Preservation Act*. This measure, which has 16 bipartisan cosponsors, would preserve the definition of "rural" under current law until 2020 Census data is available.

Thank you for your attention this matter.

Sincerely,

cc: Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Dicks, Chairman Bachus, Ranking Member Frank