



Senator Debbie Stabenow, Chair
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and
Forestry
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Glenn Thompson, Chair
Committee on Agriculture
400 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Senator John Boozman, Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and
Forestry
55 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative David Scott, Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture
468 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

June 16, 2023

Dear Senators Stabenow and Boozman and Representatives Thompson and Scott,

The past several years have been a tumultuous time in rural America. Technological change, regional inequality, trade wars, a global pandemic, and supply chain shocks have all created headwinds that have made it tougher for rural communities to thrive. As an organization dedicated to ensuring rural America's needs are heard and reflected in federal policy, the One Country Project urges you to consider the priorities outlined below when crafting this year's Farm Bill.

The Farm Bill isn't just a collection of programs—it's America's rural agenda. The realities of rural life in America today demand that this Farm Bill be different. This year, Congress can write a Farm Bill that goes beyond farm and food policy by addressing the totality of what it means to live, work, and succeed in rural communities. By investing in a vision to reinvigorate the entire rural economy and meaningfully improve people's day-to-day rural experience, Congress can put our communities on the path to a strong, vibrant, prosperous 21st century.

As Congress begins the process of writing the next policy blueprint for rural America, we recommend the following priority areas:

Securing the Farming Foundation

The stability of our agricultural system and food supply chain is essential for economic prosperity, public health, and national security. Since the last Farm Bill was written, our country has experienced extraordinary shocks to its system. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted crucial supply chains, leaving critical inputs like fertilizer scarce and resulting in [skyrocketing costs](#) – without a corresponding gain in [farmers' revenue](#). Pressures to “get big or get out” are forcing

many small and family farmers to do the latter. Many Americans do not see farming as a profitable venture. ***To secure America's farming foundation and its future, the Farm Bill should make farming economically successful and sustainable with consistent and constructive federal support.***

Living and Working in Rural America

Where one lives currently determines what services one can access – and one's quality of life. Years of deprioritizing rural America has created deserts in care, gaps in broadband, and a population of 65 million being left further and further behind. From internet to childcare, and health care to housing, rural Americans are getting left behind because they lack the basic tools and resources one needs to get an education, stay healthy, go to work, and raise a family. ***To ensure people can continue to live and work in rural America, the Farm Bill should enable rural communities to preserve the rural way of life and connect to resources that expand rural Americans' opportunities for success.***

Growing Rural America

Education, entrepreneurship, and access to capital create the conditions for opportunity, but a continued disinvestment in rural America has made it difficult for communities to find an economic foothold – causing so many rural residents leave their hometowns to seek success elsewhere. ***To provide opportunities to create a livelihood in rural America, the Farm Bill should make rural America an economically viable and vibrant destination for people to live in and grow their families.***

For too long, private capital, federal investment, and access to opportunity in rural America have lagged other regions. Under the Biden Administration, significant investments in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, CHIPS and Science Act, and Inflation Reduction Act have started to turn the tide. A comprehensive vision for a 21st century rural America cannot renege on these investments, and Congress must reject any effort to raid promised investments as it writes the next Farm Bill. Rural America needs new investment and cannot tolerate simply shifting funds from one hand to the other.

We thank you for your consideration and look forward to working with you on subsequent policy recommendations for a Farm Bill that will build a strong farming foundation, support those living and working in rural America, and maximize opportunities to grow rural America.

Sincerely,

One Country Project Board Members

Founder and former Senator Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND)
Former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy;
Wisconsin Secretary of State Sarah Godlewski;
Alabama House Minority Leader Anthony Daniels;
North Carolina State Representative Ashton Clemmons;
Iowa State Representative J.D. Scholten