



2018 Farm Bill



NARC

Building Regional Communities

National Association of Regional Councils

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

Issued February 2018

Every five years, Congress adopts a Farm Bill that includes a broad range of programs critical to regions.

Up for reauthorization in 2018, the legislation provides regional councils opportunities to:

- ✓ Advance rural development through innovative and comprehensive strategic planning with public, private, and nonprofit entities;
- ✓ Support regional food system planning that links urban and rural networks, providing food security for the entire nation; and
- ✓ Allow localities to work regionally using USDA Rural Development loans and grants to develop infrastructure improvements, community facilities, local food and farm businesses, broadband deployment, entrepreneurship, healthcare, and many other essential programs.

Today, rural communities in regions across America are facing many obstacles. They are confronting increasing health disparities, the opioid epidemic, a digital divide, and a nationwide shift of focus away from the manufacturing and coal mining jobs rural communities once relied on. **Supporting a robust, comprehensive Farm Bill is important for regional councils now more than ever to help their rural members address these challenges.**

There are many reasons to support the reauthorization of the Farm Bill in 2018. The legislation offers healthy meals for 42 million low-income Americans every month through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).



The Farm Bill incentivizes activities that ensure communities have cleaner water, soil, and air, and can dispose of wastewater. The bill also provides resources for programs to help homegrown agricultural entrepreneurs and small businesses succeed, ultimately adding to the strength and stability of our regional and national economies. When we support our rural communities, the benefits ripple throughout the entire nation.

NARC supports the reauthorization of a Farm Bill that will:

- ✓ Support local government efforts to provide critical investments in our nation's most underserved communities;
- ✓ Provide sustained funding for all twelve titles to strengthen rural infrastructure (including broadband, water, and wastewater systems), protect our nation's food supply, increase access to healthy food, and promote environmental stewardship and conservation;
- ✓ Keep "Nutrition" (Title IV) programs attached to the comprehensive Farm Bill to provide low-income Americans access to healthy foods and better health outcomes;



- ✓ Promote USDA programs that support the development of local and regional food systems;
- ✓ Support the Strategic Economic and Community Program, which incentivizes regional collaboration by prioritizing projects that serve as a part of a larger multi-jurisdictional economic development plan; and
- ✓ Continue to fund flexible USDA rural development programs that allow local governments to develop projects that best meet the needs of their communities.

For more information on the 2018 Farm Bill and the reauthorization process, please contact:

Maci Morin
Program Coordinator
maci.morin@narc.org
202.618.5691

Anna Rosenbaum
Public Affairs Manager
anna@narc.org
202.618.6363