



NARC

Building Regional Communities

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Farm Bill Reauthorization 2013

Talking Points

Setting the Stage:

- Rural development is a process focused on the economy, communities and people of areas where demographics show a widely dispersed population.
- Economic and sustainable development is important in non-urbanized areas that typically have a decentralized workforce and are characterized by out-migration.
- Rural America is largely agricultural, rich in natural resources and uniquely diverse. Regional councils are key players in advancing rural development through innovative and comprehensive strategic planning and alliances with private, public and nonprofit entities.
- Increased and sustained funding in the reauthorization of the Farm Bill's "Conservation" (Title II) and "Rural Development" (Title VI) programs and resources is important for assisting rural community improvements and offering increased economic opportunity.
- Funding flexibility for rural development programs allows localities to work regionally and locally to develop infrastructure improvements, community facilities, business development, broadband deployment, entrepreneurship, healthcare and many other essential programs.

2013 Farm Bill Reauthorization Explained:

- The Farm Bill (P.L. 110-246), which was last authorized in 2008, is an omnibus bill that combines a total of 15 titles into a single piece of legislation. The Farm Bill undergoes review and reauthorization roughly every five years.
- In 2012 the Senate passed a bill to reauthorize the 2008 Farm Bill. The House Agriculture Committee also passed a bill, but the measure was never considered on the House floor, thereby derailing efforts to pass long-term reauthorization in the 112th Congress.
- The 2008 Farm Bill expired in September 2012. A temporary extension was passed as part of the American Taxpayer Relief Act in January 2013. However, many mandatory programs, including programs supporting conservation and rural development, were cut from the temporary extension.
- Leaders in both Chambers committed to reauthorizing the Farm Bill early in the 113th Congress. The Senate and House Agriculture Committees each passed a proposal in May 2013 and the Senate passed its version through the full chamber on June 10, 2013 after nearly two weeks of debate.

What's Happening in the House:

- The House and the Senate reauthorization proposals vary greatly in funding allocated to rural development programs. The House version, the FARRM Act of 2013 (HR 1947), cuts historic mandatory funding levels for rural development by 66 percent and cuts authorization levels by 50 percent.
- NARC, and other industry partners, are calling on Members to support amendments to much-needed technical policy changes to multiple key existing USDA programs that support development of a local and regional food systems.
- NARC and industry partners also support an additional amendment to establish a Rural Broadband Pilot Program that would help create gigabit projects in rural communities.

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