



Rural communities are the backbone of America. For far too long, rural communities have been left behind. The inclusion of funding for rural water grants for disadvantaged communities and the Rural Partnership Program (RPP) in the final Reconciliation Package is an important and much needed investment to help these communities thrive. RPP will help local governments, organizations, tribes and other groups address historic inequities, challenges posed by climate change and other local needs through flexible, long-term funding for communities to implement their own solutions and build capacity.

RCAP applauds the U.S. Congress' commitment to funding RPP and other rural development priorities including rural water grants for disadvantaged communities in the reconciliation package and appreciates the tireless work of Chairman Scott, Chairman Stabenow, Representatives Delgado, Craig and Bustos, and Senators Gillibrand, Smith, Durbin, Kelly, Warnock and Baldwin in championing the need for change in how we support rural communities and encourage all lawmakers to support this important program. We look forward to working with lawmakers and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to implement this historic investment in rural development.

### **Equity**

For too long, rural Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and tribal communities have been left behind by federal economic development programs. These communities have unique needs stemming from decades of inequitable treatment that have curbed their ability to grow and prosper. The RPP and investments in rural water are an important step in addressing these issues as it will allow rural communities of color to craft their own solutions, empowering residents and local leaders to create the programs and assistance they need to thrive. We appreciate the hard work of Congressional leaders to fund this program in the Reconciliation Package and look forward working with the Administration to ensure a swift, effective and equitable implementation.

### **Capacity building**

Successful rural development requires communities to have resources and expertise to successfully win grants, implement projects and provide matching funds. However, for many communities, those resources have long been out of reach. The RPP and existing RD Water and Environmental Technical Assistance and Training Programs will address this issue by providing communities with the funds and skills needed to harness federal and private grants to build a more prosperous and equitable future. We appreciate the hard work of Democrats in Congress to fund this program in the Reconciliation Package and look forward working with the Biden Administration to ensure a swift and effective implementation.

