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### **WTA Praises Passage of Farm Bill Broadband Programs**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (December 12, 2018)** – WTA – Advocates for Rural Broadband praises Congress for passing the Farm Bill this week, which contains important provisions that will spur broadband growth in rural America. Among other thing, the bill provides the U.S. Department of Agriculture the authority to make grants to build broadband networks in rural areas and allows USDA’s Rural Utilities Service (RUS) to refinance telecommunications loans.

“WTA has long advocated for broadband grant-making authority for RUS,” said Derrick Owens, WTA’s Senior Vice President of Government & Industry Affairs. “Grants will complement the existing low-interest loan programs to get broadband out to those rural areas where additional assistance is needed.

“A number of WTA’s members received RUS Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP) loan/grant combinations provided under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that extended broadband to unserved rural communities,” said Owens. We’re pleased to see Congress follow up on that success by creating a more permanent grant program. Rural communities deserve reasonably comparable communications services to urban communities and this new authority will help achieve that objective.”

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*WTA – Advocates for Rural Broadband is a national trade association that represents more than 340 small, rural telecommunications carriers providing voice, broadband and video-related services in the United States. WTA’s members serve some of the most rural and hard-to-serve communities in the country and are on the forefront of bringing 21st Century telecommunications services to rural America. To learn more about WTA, visit [www.w-t-a.org](http://www.w-t-a.org).*