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COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
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COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE,  
AND TECHNOLOGY

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 4, 2019

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The Honorable Sanford Bishop, Jr.  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations,  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural  
Development, FDA, & Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations,  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural  
Development, FDA, & Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Fortenberry:

As you begin work on the fiscal year 2020 Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, & Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, I urge you to fund the Rural eConnectivity Pilot Program, also known as the ReConnect program, at a full funding level of \$600 million.

Adequate funding for the ReConnect program is essential because too many communities lack sufficient broadband access and infrastructure, which is crucial for Twenty-First Century life. The ReConnect program provides federal grants and loans to facilitate broadband deployment to the nation's most technologically-underserved communities. Broadband infrastructure can help rural communities access telemedicine, improve responsiveness times for emergency services, increase education opportunities, and support workforce development.

At a fiscal year 2020 funding level of \$600 million, the program will be able to provide high speed internet e-Connectivity and broadband access to communities that do not have sufficient infrastructure for connectivity. The \$600 million funding level aligns with the program's original appropriation in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-141) enacted on March 23, 2018.

I urge you to support this full funding level for the ReConnect program. Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,



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Troy Balderson  
Member of Congress