



# **Chairman Hal Rogers**

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## **House Committee on Appropriations**

### **Subcommittee Markup**

**FY 2016 Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill  
June 18, 2015**

### **Opening Statement As Prepared**

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I thank the Chairman for yielding, and I congratulate him on bringing the Fiscal Year 2016 appropriations bill for the Department of Agriculture, the FDA, and other related agencies before the subcommittee today. Chairman Aderholt, Ranking Member Farr, and staff on both sides have worked tirelessly on this important piece of legislation.

The FY16 Agriculture bill includes discretionary appropriations of \$20.65 billion, which is \$175 million below the FY15 enacted level and \$1.1 billion below the President's budget request. I am pleased with the savings we have been able to find in this bill while still providing necessary funding for important agricultural and food programs and services, including food and medical product safety, animal and plant health programs, rural development and farm services, marketplace oversight, and nutrition programs. The bill also includes a number of legislative provisions to fix misguided policies that negatively impact individuals and businesses throughout the food, drug, and financial industries.

This committee recognizes the importance of USDA's role in improving the economy and the quality of life in rural communities across the country. This legislation funds Rural Development at \$2.5 billion. The bill includes funding for important loan and rental programs that provide low-income families and individuals with more housing options in their rural communities, as well as ample support for Business and Industry loans that allow private lenders to provide more affordable financing for businesses in rural areas, which in turn allows for the creation of new jobs through new company development and small business expansion. Language is also included that expresses the committee's support for USDA's efforts to assist at-risk communities through the StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity.

Infrastructure is key to the health of rural communities. The legislation therefore provides support for important rural infrastructure. \$1.25 billion is available for rural water and waste program loans, which is \$50 million above the FY 16 request. Additionally, \$474 million is provided for water and waste grants, including \$16 million for the circuit rider program. We support rural electric and telephone infrastructure loans at \$6.2 billion.

I want to commend Chairman Aderholt for putting together a good bill, and I urge the subcommittee to support it. Thank you, and I yield back.

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