

From: "Trey@HBE1902.com%inter2" <Trey@HBE1902.com>
Subject: Farm Bill 2007 Official Comments - 10/06/2005 02:55 PM CDT
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Question1:

Question2:

Question3:

Question4:

Question5: I am a civil engineer working in private practice who consults regularly on projects which extend public water service into rural areas in north central West Virginia. The majority of my clients are public service districts, private water associations and small municipalities who serve, or have the burden to serve, primarily rural residents. Not surprisingly, many of these outlying areas in north central West Virginia are farms.

Consequently, the customer density is much less than that of urban or suburban areas, and the costs per customer to provide public water service in the rural areas is much higher. In order to keep monthly average water rates in a reasonable range (\$35.00 - \$50.00/mo), these projects must rely upon low interest loans and grant funding to be economically feasible.

There are several State and/or Federal agencies which have low interest loan and grant programs, including the one I am most familiar with - the USDA Rural Development (Rural Utility Service). Formerly known as the Farmer's Home Administration, RUS provides a blend of low interest loan and grant funds, without which many rural water projects could ever come to fruition. It is a very important program that provides real and tangible benefits to farmers and other rural residents in the form of reliable, potable, public water service. Many of these outlying residents suffer from inadequate quantity and/or quality of water from private well sources. The lack of a plentiful and reliable public water source negatively impacts quality of life and, often, the ability to expand economic growth through livestock and agriculture.

I would urge the USDA to include a larger apportionment in its budget for the continuation of funding for the Rural Utilities Service so that it can continue to reach out to the more rural and distant residents of West Virginia and other states. Frequently, RUS funding is combined with other sources of State funding to make these rural water projects feasible. The elimination or reduction of the RUS funding would effectively kill many projects, because the other sources of funding are not adequate by themselves. Funding for this program really works, and a reduction in its budget would be hard felt by the residents in the areas of future projects currently trying to assemble a feasible funding package.

Sincerely,

Hornor Brothers Engineers

Trey Hornor, P.E.
President

Question6: