

# Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021



National  
Farmers  
Union

Farmers and ranchers rely on our nation's highways, bridges, railways, and waterways to transport food, animals, and other agricultural products. Farmers, like the rest of the world, have been especially dependent on broadband access to participate in many parts of society, and have had to travel longer distances to bring their products to market. There's also the increasing need to try to mitigate the effects of extreme weather. These needs have long been left unaddressed by federal legislation – until Congress and the Biden Administration took action.

The passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) in November 2021 is a \$1.2 trillion investment that is already benefiting rural America. It is the largest investment in resilience of our infrastructure in American history, makes communities safer from natural disasters, and prepares our infrastructure for the impacts of climate change. Implementation of this historic infrastructure law continues to boost rural communities and the economy overall.

## **Broadband**

Farmers and ranchers are now better able to stay connected and competitive in today's global economy through improved access to the internet and transportation upgrades. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 1 in 4 farmers lacked access to broadband in 2019. Rural areas have been hampered by a lack of affordable, readily available high speed internet connectivity.

Programs such as USDA's ReConnect, which funds facilities that provide broadband service to unserved or underserved areas, also received additional funding from the IIJA. This will be used for projects that serve rural areas where at least 90 percent of households lack broadband service.

## **Climate Resilience**

The IIJA includes funds to protect against droughts and floods and provides a major investment in weatherization. For western water infrastructure, the law authorizes programs and funding for water storage, conveyance, maintenance and repair, water recycling and reuse, drought contingency, desalination, and a new watershed health competitive grant program. The law also includes funding for existing USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service programs that improve the resilience of watersheds. A large portion of funding is also being used to fight wildfires by preparing communities and creating post-fire restoration and rehabilitation.

## **Transportation**

This once-in-a-generation infrastructure law is also an investment towards the security of our nation's food supply chain by ensuring that agriculture keeps moving. In addition to new transportation funding for roads, bridges, highways, waterways and transit, the law also provides hours-of-service regulatory relief to livestock haulers under the agricultural hours exemption, which provides the flexibility farmers and ranchers need to safely deliver their products to market on time.

## **What We Can Do:**

- Urge lawmakers to work with the federal agencies responsible for infrastructure to ensure that funding is distributed in a timely and appropriate manner to benefit family farmers, ranchers, and our communities.



- **More than 30 million Americans live in areas without broadband infrastructure**
- **45,000 bridges and 173,000 miles of highways and major roads are in poor condition**
- **There were 22 extreme weather events in the U.S. in 2021 that resulted in a grand total of more than \$100 billion in losses**

### **The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 includes:**

- **\$110 billion for roads, bridges, and major repair projects**
- **\$65 billion to deploy and expand reliable, high-speed internet to underserved, unserved, and low-income areas**
- **\$50 billion to protect against droughts, heat, floods, and wildfires**