

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS RESOLUTION ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Resolution Summary

Every five years Congress produces the nation's flagship legislation on farm policy. It's no small undertaking. The Farm Bill contains something on just about everything—from nutrition to research, from energy to rural development and, of course, agriculture. The current farm bill had a multitude of rural development objectives, but little funding for them. The current deficit ensures even tighter spending restrictions on the 2007 Farm Bill.

This resolution supports the traditional and nontraditional rural development programming; providing funds for hospitals, water, sewer, internet access, road improvement, and better coordination of federal programs, as well as regional collaboration and entrepreneurship.

One of the biggest challenges facing rural America is the fact that it gets shortchanged in federal funding. Federal spending on urban community development is two to five times higher than rural, per capita. Not only do rural areas get 8 percent fewer dollars per capita than urban areas, less of the money is for building the capacity needed to create economic and community development. Each year from 1994 to 2001 (latest data available), the federal government spent two to five times more, per capita, on urban than rural community development. Rural policy is not just small scale version of urban economic development but has its own characteristics, needs and asset determination.

This resolution was approved by The Council of State Governments-Midwestern Legislative Conference on Aug. 23, 2006 at its annual meeting.

Rural Development Management Directives

Management Directive #1: CSG staff would need to send copies of this to members of the U. S. House and Senate agriculture, transportation and health committees and to the Secretaries of the United States Departments of Agriculture, Transportation and Health and Human Services.

**THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS
RESOLUTION ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

WHEREAS, a variety of conditions over the last two decades have resulted in declines in rural farm economies, decreases in small rural businesses and declines in natural resource based economies; and

WHEREAS, such conditions have had dramatic impacts on the ability of rural areas to remain self-sufficient, and have contributed to the outmigration of younger residents; and

WHEREAS, ninety-three percent of farm households, which control two-thirds of all farmland in the United States, earn most of their income from off farm sources, thus off-farm employment is key to maintaining many small and medium sized farms and ranches; and

WHEREAS, water, wastewater, telecommunications, health and transportation infrastructure maintenance and improvements are imperative for preservation of the natural environment, promotion of economic development and health of rural residents and this maintenance has relied on federal assistance; and

WHEREAS, niche markets, value-added enterprises and broadened direct-to-consumer marketing opportunities are one way of increasing employment and diversifying risk for rural communities and offer economic advantages to both consumers and producers; and

WHEREAS, healthy, vibrant rural communities are needed to provide the jobs to retain rural youth, and support medium and small sized farms and ranches; and

WHEREAS, it is accepted that government supports small business ventures as an efficient way of maintaining economic growth. and it is vital to our food security that such opportunities be made be available to the farmers and producers upon whom we depend for foodstuffs; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that Congress of the United States and the United States Department of Agriculture make the Rural Development title of the Farm Bill reauthorization a priority in terms of both programming and funding; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Rural Development title continue to include funds and technical assistance for the Rural Utilities Service; and be it further

RESOLVED, that programs and incentives for adding value to agriculture commodities and assisting in the research and development of new market opportunities be a priority in the farm bill reauthorization; and be it further

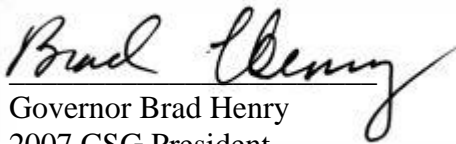
RESOLVED, that the USDA Beginning Farmer program be continued and fully funded; and be it further


RESOLVED, that Congress support adequate funding for programs with proven track records in recruiting, training, and placing health professions students in rural practice, provide assistance to rural health care organizations to engage in ongoing measurement of and support and quality improvement strategies, ensure that measurement and reporting (especially public reporting) reflects the unique data and roles of rural health care providers, facilitate the spread of successful health information technology programs through federally supported technical assistance.

RESOLVED, that this resolution be submitted to the members of the U. S. House and Senate agriculture, transportation and health committees; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this resolution be submitted to the Secretaries of the United States Departments of Agriculture, Transportation and Health and Human Services.

Adopted this 13th Day of June, 2007 at the
CSG Spring National Committee and Task Force Meetings
In Puerto Rico


Governor Brad Henry
2007 CSG President


Representative Deborah Hudson
2007 CSG Chair