Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2015

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies
2362-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6016

The Honorable Sam Farr
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-601

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member Farr:

As you consider the fiscal year 2016 Agriculture Appropriations bill, we write to express our strong support for funding Rural Utility Service (RUS) Electric Loans at the same level as last year, a level lower than requested by the President.

Consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives generate less than five percent of the nation's electric power but maintain nearly half the nation's electric distribution lines. Electric cooperatives' distribution systems cover 75 percent of this country's land mass while serving 12 percent of American electric consumers. Electric cooperatives use RUS Electric Loans to finance electricity generation and distribution and provide affordable, reliable electric service to approximately 42 million people every day.

As you know, these loans are repaid with interest and have an extraordinary track record of repayment. RUS Electric Loans also contribute to deficit reduction. In fiscal year 2016 alone, electric loan repayments will net nearly $300 million to the U.S. Treasury.

The President's Budget recommends that portions of the total loan amount be directed toward specific purposes. Instead, we suggest RUS lending continue to be driven by the needs of the borrower rather than limited by the type of project proposed. This flexibility will help meet the diverse challenges of RUS electric borrowers and ensure loans are available whether the project is for environmental upgrades to current generation, the construction of renewable or natural gas generation, or the development of new baseload generation.

Lowering the U.S. deficit and keeping consumer co-op electric bills affordable are mutually beneficial goals we can all support. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

**Michael Conaway**
**Member of Congress**

**Collin Peterson**
**Member of Congress**



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