

Rural County Representatives of California Reports President Trump Promotes Rural Broadband During Farm Bureau Speech

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January 14, 2018 - On Monday, President Trump delivered a speech at the 99th Annual Farm Bureau Convention where he signed two executive orders to expand broadband deployment in rural areas.

The first order, "Streamlining and Expediting Requests to Locate Broadband Facilities in Rural America," will accelerate the deployment of broadband in rural areas by ordering executive departments and agencies to reduce barriers to capital investment in broadband services. More specifically, the order will streamline the application process for broadband deployment on federal property. **The second order is a Presidential Memorandum for the Secretary of the Interior that will support broadband tower facilities on federal property managed by the Department of the Interior (DOI).** The order states "Lowering the costs of broadband deployment to rural areas can strengthen the business case for broadband facilities deployment and therefore amplify investments in broadband infrastructure. To that end, the executive branch will seek to make Federal assets more available for rural broadband deployment." The order directs Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to identify assets managed by the DOI that may be used to support rural broadband deployment and adoption.

President Trump signed the executive orders the same day he received an official report from the Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity (Task Force) that prioritized expanding broadband deployment in underserved rural areas. The Task Force was formed by President Trump to make recommendations to promote economic development and improve the quality of life in rural America. On Monday, the Task Force reported to the President that his Administration should focus on the five following priorities in rural America:

- Enhancing broadband access and commercial connections in the country's rural areas;
- Improving quality of life, including addressing opioids, education and recreation;
- Generating a reliable workforce;
- Advancing technological innovations; and,

- Economic development.

The Administration will have opportunities to address many of these recommendations in 2018 through the infrastructure package and the rural development title of the 2018 Farm Bill (a high priority for RCRC's advocacy team). In addition, the President pledged that his Administration will invest in infrastructure and continue to eliminate/reduce Obama-era regulations that hamstring rural economies. President Trump specifically praised his own order to repeal the Waters of the United States rule and pledged to cut regulations for logging and timber industries. The President also pledged that the 2018 Farm Bill will be done "on time" and offered his endorsement of the federal crop insurance program.

Source: Rural County Representatives of California

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