

RCRC Rural Broadband Update: Rural Communities With A Population Of 20,000 Or Less And 10 Megabits Per Second Or Slower Will Qualify For Assistance From The Pilot Program

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August 11, 2018 - This week, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is accepting comments on the implementation of the e-Connectivity Pilot Program created in the omnibus spending measure that was signed into law on March 23, 2018. The omnibus package appropriated \$600 million for the pilot program within the Rural Utilities Service to finance broadband deployment projects in underserved rural areas.

Rural communities with a population of 20,000 or less with an internet speed of 10 megabits per second or slower will qualify for assistance from the pilot program. Comments for the program's implementation are due on September 10, 2018.

In addition, the USDA announced it will invest \$97 million in 12 projects across 11 states that will increase internet service for underserved or unserved rural areas. The states impacted by the program would include Arizona, Iowa, Idaho, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Wisconsin and Wyoming. The \$97 million will come from the Telecommunications Infrastructure Loan Program and the Community Connect Grant Program at the USDA. Rural California will not benefit from this round of investment, but the USDA reiterated that such investments are the key to rural prosperity and a priority for the agency under the Trump Administration.

Source: Rural County Representatives of California

<http://goldrushcam.com/sierrasuntimes/index.php/news/local-news/15193-rcrc-rural-broadband-update-rural-communities-with-a-population-of-20-000-or-less-and-10-megabits-per-second-or-slower-will-qualify-for-assistance-from-the-pilot-program>