DATE

The Honorable [First Name Last Name]

Office

City, State Zip

Dear Congressman [Last Name]:

On behalf of [insert name of organization], we encourage you to support efforts to include funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) program.

The House of Representatives Agriculture Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2014 eliminates RCDG funding that is critical to the development of cooperatives and businesses in rural America. The Senate provides $8.8 million in their funding bill for the program. We encourage you to support the Senate funding level as the bill progresses through the legislative process.

While “Rural Cooperative Development Grants” is listed in the bill, the funding provided for the account leaves no funds for the actual RCDG program because the account funds other programs as well. Without sufficient funding for the RCDG program, cooperative development centers providing hands-on assistance will be unable to operate, and the only existing program in the federal government dedicated to cooperative development would be hindered significantly or possibly eliminated.

Cooperatives and their supporters worked with Congress in the 1990’s to create this important program that serves a specific need which is providing technical assistance to create and develop cooperatives in rural America. The program encourages the development of new economic activity and the creation of critically needed jobs in rural areas. Over the years, RCDG funding has been a key foundation for building such economic development in many rural communities across the country.

We hope you will continue to be supportive of this vital and effective program as the bill moves forward in Congress.

Sincerely,

NAME

TITLE