

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 7, 2013

The Honorable Mark Pryor  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug  
Administration and Related Agencies  
129 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug  
Administration and Related Agencies  
190 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Pryor and Ranking Member Blunt:

We write today to convey the vital role of Rural Utilities Service (RUS) electric loans in maintaining strong electricity infrastructure throughout the country. As you consider the fiscal year 2014 Agriculture Appropriations bill, we urge you to support the RUS Electric loan level requested in the President's Budget, a level lower than the currently enacted level which has been in place since 2008. We also ask that the Committee recognize the importance of a broad-based domestic energy supply and support RUS in financing the full range of cost-effective electric generation.

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 2014 alone, electric loan repayments will net more than \$130 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

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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,



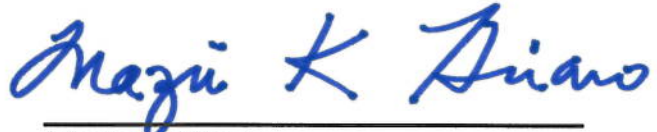
Heidi Heitkamp



Johnny Isakson



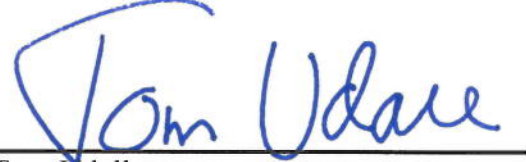
Charles Grassley



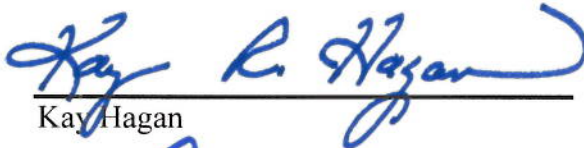
Mazie K. Hirono



James M. Inhofe



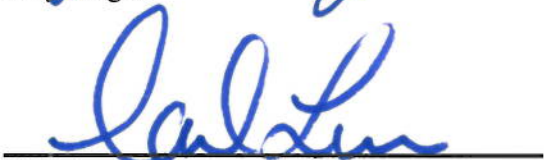
Tom Udall



Kay Hagan



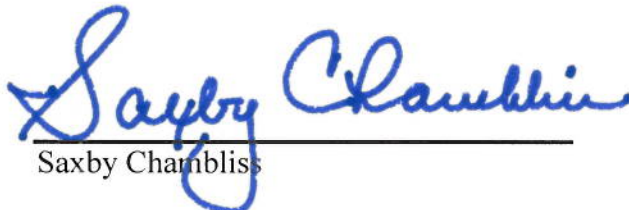
Mary Landrieu



Carl Levin



Bill Nelson



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Kirsten E. Gillibrand

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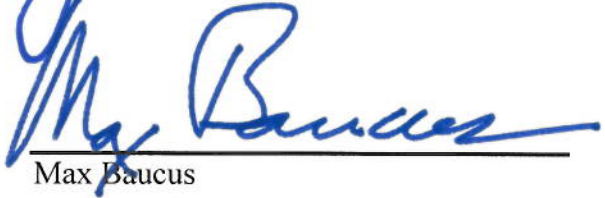
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John Barrasso



Tammy Baldwin



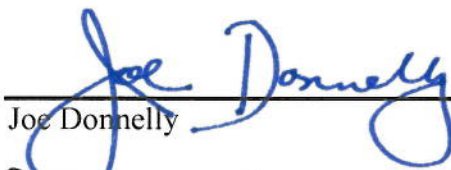
Max Baucus



Tim Johnson



Bernie Sanders



Joe Donnelly



Martin Heinrich



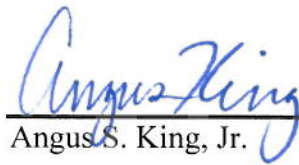
John Hoeven



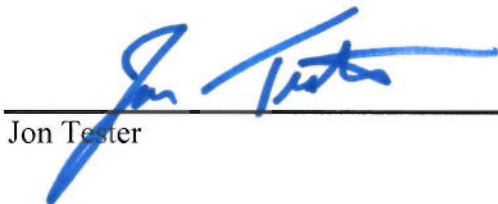
Roger F. Wicker



Jeanne Shaheen



Angus S. King, Jr.



Jon Tester



Deb Fischer



Amy Klobuchar