

Reps. Kind, Walorski: Lead bipartisan letter urging treasury dept. to ensure access to small business programs

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La Crosse, WI—Today, **Reps. Ron Kind** (D-WI), **Jackie Walorski** (R-IN), and 163 of their colleagues sent a letter to the Department of Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin demanding that he provide immediate clarity for rural electric cooperatives' eligibility for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). Congress is expected to replenish the PPP later this week.

Nearly all electric cooperatives are classified as “small” under the Small Business Administration’s (SBA) size standards, with the average cooperative employing under 50 people. With these electric cooperatives facing the same challenges as many other small businesses, Rep. Kind and his colleagues are urging the SBA to ensure that these cooperatives are eligible for the PPP. Without additional guidance on PPP from Secretary Mnuchin, these cooperatives—which primarily serve people in rural America—could be severely impacted.

“Electric cooperatives power Wisconsin’s rural economies and ensure that our homes and businesses have a reliable and affordable source of electricity. During these difficult times caused by COVID-19, many of these electric cooperatives are stepping up and making sure people are staying connected by suspending disconnections,” said **Rep. Ron Kind**. “Just like every other small business, we need to ensure that electric cooperatives have access to small business programs that will help them continue to serve their customers, keep the lights on, and pay their workers until this pandemic is over.”

There are 930 rural electric cooperative systems nationwide, with 13 electric cooperatives in Wisconsin's Third Congressional District. More than 42 million consumers today are served by rural electric cooperative systems, including nearly 600,000 in Wisconsin.