

Wisconsin Farmers Union: Lauds passage of infrastructure deal

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HIPPEWA FALLS — On November 5th, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (H.R. 3684).

Wisconsin Farmers Union President Darin Von Ruden issued the following statement:

The passage of the Build Back Better Agenda represents a historic investment in the critical infrastructure needs of family farmers and our communities. The effects of this effort will be far-reaching, as the bill aims to strengthen our food supply chain through tremendous investment in the transportation infrastructure that family farmers rely on. Provisions of the bill will also help us bridge the gap on broadband access, respond to and begin countering the climate crisis, and reduce supply chain bottlenecks. This once-in-a-generation bipartisan investment has the potential to create jobs, transform our transportation system, and put us on a path to a more competitive, prosperous economy.

In Wisconsin there are 979 bridges and over 1,949 miles of highway in poor condition. Based on formula funding alone, Wisconsin would expect to receive \$5.2 billion for federal-aid highway apportioned programs and \$225 million for bridge replacement and repairs under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act over five years. Wisconsin can also compete for the \$12.5 billion Bridge Investment Program for economically significant bridges and nearly \$16 billion of national funding in the bill dedicated for major projects that will deliver substantial economic benefits to communities.

Currently, 5.5% of Wisconsin residents live in areas where, under the FCC's benchmark, there is no broadband infrastructure. Even where infrastructure is

available, broadband may be too expensive to be within reach. Under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Wisconsin will receive a minimum allocation of \$100 million to help provide broadband coverage across the state, including providing access to the at least 318,000 Wisconsin residents who currently lack it. Additionally, 1,246,000 or 22% of people in Wisconsin will be eligible for the Affordability Connectivity Benefit, which will help low-income families afford internet access.

From 2010 to 2020, Wisconsin experienced 16 extreme weather events, costing the state up to \$10 billion in damages. Under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, based on historical formula funding levels, Wisconsin will expect to receive \$20 million over five years to protect against wildfires and \$18 million to protect against cyberattacks. Wisconsin residents will also benefit from the bill's historic \$3.5 billion national investment in weatherization which will reduce energy costs for families.

Currently, up to 10 million American households and 400,000 schools and child care centers lack safe drinking water. Under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, based on the traditional state revolving fund formula, Wisconsin will expect to receive \$841 million over five years to improve water infrastructure across the state and ensure that clean, safe drinking water is a right in all communities.

For source information for the above-listed statistics and more background, check out [this fact sheet](#) on how the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will deliver for Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Farmers Union, a member-driven organization, is committed to enhancing the quality of life for family farmers, rural communities, and all people through educational opportunities, cooperative endeavors, and civic engagement. Learn more at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com.