

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To require the creation of a simplified Department of Agriculture grant form for use by rural communities.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Ms. LUMMIS (for herself and Mr. BARRASSO) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To require the creation of a simplified Department of Agriculture grant form for use by rural communities.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “USDA Grant Sim-
5 plification Act of 2024”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

8 (1) DEPARTMENT.—The term “Department”
9 means the Department of Agriculture.

10 (2) RURAL COMMUNITY.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “rural com-
2 munity” means an incorporated municipality,
3 Tribal area, or territory—

4 (i) with a population of not more than
5 10,000, as determined by the Bureau of
6 the Census in the most recent decennial
7 census; or

8 (ii) that is not located in a metropoli-
9 tan statistical area, as designated by the
10 Director of the Office of Management and
11 Budget.

12 (B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “rural com-
13 munity” includes a nonmunicipal publicly elect-
14 ed or appointed local infrastructure political
15 subdivision described in clause (i) or (ii) of sub-
16 paragraph (A), including—

17 (i) a water district;

18 (ii) an irrigation district;

19 (iii) a road and bridge district; and

20 (iv) a fire district.

21 (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
22 the Secretary of Agriculture.

23 (4) SHORT FORM APPLICATION.—The term
24 “short form application” means the short form ap-
25 plication described in section 3(a).

1 **SEC. 3. CREATION OF A STANDARD SHORT FORM APPLICA-**
2 **TION.**

3 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 180 days after the
4 date of enactment of this Act, and after soliciting input
5 from rural communities in accordance with subsection (b),
6 the Secretary shall create a standardized grant application
7 short form for use by a rural community when applying
8 for a grant under a grant program of the Department for
9 which the rural community is otherwise eligible.

10 (b) **RURAL COMMUNITY INPUT.**—The Secretary shall
11 solicit input from a representative group of rural commu-
12 nities on the challenges faced by rural communities in
13 finding and applying for grants from the Department, in-
14 cluding—

15 (1) the length of applications;

16 (2) the information and documents requested
17 by the application;

18 (3) the applicability of questions and requested
19 materials to rural communities; and

20 (4) any other consideration that the Secretary
21 determines to be necessary for the creation of the
22 short form application.

23 (c) **CONTENTS OF SHORT FORM APPLICATION.**—The
24 short form application shall—

25 (1) include—

1 (A) basic information common to all appli-
2 cations for grants from the Department for
3 which rural communities are eligible; and

4 (B) any other information the Secretary,
5 in consultation with rural communities in ac-
6 cordance with subsection (b), determines nec-
7 essary to include; and

8 (2) exclude questions and requests for informa-
9 tion that are not applicable to a rural community.

10 (d) USE OF SHORT FORM APPLICATION.—

11 (1) GRANT PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION.—Not
12 later than 90 days after the creation of the short
13 form application, the Secretary shall identify grant
14 programs administered by the Department for
15 which—

16 (A) rural communities are eligible to re-
17 ceive funds; and

18 (B) the application requirements are in ex-
19 cess of those in the short form application.

20 (2) IMPLEMENTATION.—Except as provided in
21 paragraph (3), not later than 180 days after the
22 Secretary identifies grant programs under paragraph
23 (1), the Secretary shall accept the short form appli-
24 cation from a rural community for those programs.

1 (3) EXCEPTION.—Paragraph (2) shall not
2 apply to a grant program identified under paragraph
3 (1) for which changes to the application process are
4 not feasible, including a grant program for which
5 changes to the application process require rule-
6 making.