Farmers and ranchers depend on reliable infrastructure to grow their crops and livestock, deliver their products and expand their markets. Limited access to broadband in rural communities, deteriorating and underfunded transportation systems and a lack of available labor hinders agricultural productivity. NASDA believes in maintaining fairness and equity within the agriculture community through funding and developing rural roads, highways, waterways, railways and broadband infrastructure.

NASDA supports funding the expansion of broadband access to rural communities. Farmers and ranchers depend on broadband just as they do highways, railways and waterways to deliver their products around the world. As the pandemic highlighted, rural communities need broadband access for health care, government services, educational and business opportunities. According to the Federal Communications Commission, 26.4 percent of rural Americans lack access to 25 Mbps/3 Mbps service, compared to only 1.7 percent of urban Americans. NASDA is taking an active role in working towards a resolution of rural broadband through participation in the American Connection Project Broadband Coalition and a member of the FCC’s Precision Agriculture Taskforce.

Agriculture relies heavily on a consistent and dependable transportation system to move their products and equipment, expand their markets and provide financial sustainability for their business. The U.S. transportation system needs significant funding to improve the movement of commodities.

**26.4% OF RURAL AMERICANS LACK ACCESS**

to broadband service, compared to only 1.7 percent of urban Americans.

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As the COVID-19 response remains, NASDA continues to advocate for expanding the funding capacity to state departments of agriculture to work in partnership with food producers, processors and consumers in their local communities to ensure regional and local food supply issues needs are met. State departments of agriculture have proven their ability to effectively respond to the unique needs of the food and agriculture sector and rural communities. Additional support for the priorities discussed below will provide state departments of agriculture with the flexibility to respond to the variable, and largely still unknown, food supply issues in their state.

- **Keeping Workers & Food Safe**: Enhance access to Personal Protective Equipment and COVID-19 testing for food and agricultural workers.
- **Local & Regional Food Systems**: Provide funding for relief and recovery programs with the specific needs of small/micro agricultural producers in mind.
- **Expansion of Food Processing and Distribution**: Invest in local processing infrastructure.
- **Support for Rural Recovery Efforts**: Collaborate with extension and other state agencies to provide economic assistance to farmers, ranchers and rural communities.

**NASDA ASK**

NASDA supports funding programs to improve rural access to modern and affordable broadband services.

NASDA asks Congress to provide significant funding to improve the rural roads, highways, waterways, railways and broadband infrastructure, which are necessary for the agricultural community to deliver their commodities and products around the world.

NASDA will work for a reliable framework that provides for a strong infrastructure and workforce that supports the industry and treats workers with respect. American agriculture faces a critical shortage of labor and outdated infrastructure that harms annual harvests, animal agriculture production and processing facilities.

NASDA encourages Congress to support programs that enhance farmers, ranchers and their rural communities and ensure a safe, affordable, and abundant food supply. Furthermore, NASDA supports additional funds to alleviate unprecedented strains COVID-19 has placed on our food supply system.