

July 22, 2024

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Please oppose H.R. 9027, which raises energy costs for rural America.

Dear Representative,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters, the 19 undersigned groups urge you to oppose H.R. 9027, the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2025 as well as any amendments that further burden rural America with high energy costs and impair the climate resilience needed to feed America.

Rural America and American farmers are on the frontline of climate change, with their livelihoods dependent on stable and predictable climates. As climate change intensifies extreme weather events, [agricultural productivity is expected to decline](#), fundamentally challenging rural economies and cultures. And while more than 245 million Americans experience temperatures above 90 degrees Fahrenheit this week, rural America lags behind in responding to these extreme weather events, lacking the infrastructure and resources needed to protect their communities. However, with federal support and incentives, rural communities and the agriculture industry can play an essential role in confronting climate change while saving Americans money.

Unfortunately, the House's FY25 Agriculture appropriations bill makes devastating funding cuts to essential energy efficiency programs that would lower costs for rural consumers and reduce their environmental impact. It cuts 90% of the President's requested budget for the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), which grants funding to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to install renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements. It cuts 95% of the President's requested funding for the Rural Energy Savings Program, further exposing rural America to high energy costs. Moreover, in neither the bill text nor the report does the word "climate" appear despite farmers being so intimately and directly impacted by worsening climate change. In fact, H.R. 9027 completely rejects the President's budget request for USDA's climate hubs, represents an \$82 million cut from the budget request for conservation operations to assist farmers with implementing climate-smart practices, rescinds \$50 million for the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and turns back the clock for USDA on outreach to farmers adopting climate friendly practices. Instead of ignoring the impacts of climate change on rural America, Congress should put meaningful federal dollars to work supporting those communities and the agriculture industry.

In addition to the woefully low funding levels proposed in this legislation, H.R. 9027 includes numerous poison pill policy riders that make it more difficult for rural Americans to maintain their livelihoods and put food on the table, while leaving them vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. One such rider prevents USDA from requiring new homes backed by their programs to be

built to the latest energy efficiency codes, resulting in poorly constructed homes and higher energy costs. Poison pill riders such as these and the many exclusionary and discriminatory riders in this bill were removed from the final FY24 Agriculture bill just a few months ago; by going down this path again, we fear Congress is wasting valuable time that could be better spent producing bipartisan legislation that has a realistic chance of becoming law.

Again, we urge you to REJECT H.R. 9027, the FY25 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, which would burden rural America with climate change's high price tag.

Sincerely,

CCAN Action Fund  
Clean Water Action  
Climate Action Campaign  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Earthjustice  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Environmental Law & Policy Center  
Environmental Working Group  
Interfaith Power & Light  
League of Conservation Voters  
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition  
National Wildlife Federation  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Sierra Club  
The Conservation Angler  
The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation  
Union of Concerned Scientists