

July 23, 2025

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Appropriations Committee
United States Senate

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Appropriations Committee
United States Senate

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
Appropriation Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

RE: FY 2026 Federal Regional Commissions Appropriations

Dear Chair Collins, Ranking Member Murray, Chair Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

On behalf of the members of the National Rural Health Association (NRHA), **we urge Congress to continue funding for the federal regional commissions in FY26 appropriations.**

NRHA is a non-profit membership organization with more than 21,000 members nationwide that provides leadership on rural health issues. Our membership includes every component of rural America's health care, including rural community hospitals, critical access hospitals, doctors, nurses, and patients. We provide leadership on rural health issues through advocacy, communications, education, and research.

Federal regional commissions are congressionally chartered, federal-state partnerships that seek to address economic distress in their designated regions. These six active regional commissions serve over 80 million people, half of which reside in rural areas.¹ Regional commissions support rural communities by investing in basic infrastructure, workforce, healthcare, and business development to reduce regional economic distress. These efforts vitally support the economic health of rural communities. Regional commissions aid in improving transportation, broadband access, housing, and sanitation infrastructure, and help to fund efforts that combat opioid use and support nutrition access. These activities address key factors that uniquely impact health outcomes among rural communities.

The President's fiscal year (FY) 2026 budget request calls for eliminating funding for 5 of the 6 regional commissions, including the Delta Regional Authority (DRA), Denali Commission, Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC), Southwest Border Regional Commission (SBRC), and Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC). The primary source of funding for regional commissions is congressionally appropriated base funding.² Zeroing out this funding would devastate efforts to improve economic and health outcomes in these regions. We strongly urge Congress to oppose any budget that threatens these essential rural health investments and fully fund all six regional commissions.

¹ <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R45997>

² <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF12165>



We thank you for your continued efforts to support rural health care and economic development through the federal regional commissions. If you have any questions or would like to discuss federal rural health programs further, please contact NRHA's Government Affairs and Policy Director Alexa McKinley Abel at amckinley@ruralhealth.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan Morgan", is positioned above the printed name.

Alan Morgan
Chief Executive Officer
National Rural Health Association