

Resolution # 2024-51

Supporting a Realistic Federal Definition of "Rural"

WHEREAS increasing access to federal funding in Washburn County is essential to the long-term sustainability of county and municipal infrastructure; and

WHEREAS the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law created the Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program; and

WHEREAS the federal Department of Transportation defines "rural area" as an area that is outside an urbanized area with a population of over 200,000. 23 U.S.C. Section 173(a)(2); and

WHEREAS the Rebuilding Rural Roads Act (H.R. 3002) and Protecting Infrastructure Investments for Rural America Act (H.R. 5437) would reduce the definition of rural under the Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program from 200,000 to 20,000 giving rural communities a greater opportunity to access these grant funds and aligning with definitions used by the Small Business Administration and USDA Office of Rural Development; and

WHEREAS H.R. 5437 would not only reduce the definition of rural to 20,000 but would also:

1. Clarify that the goal of the Rural Grant program is to promote economic development in rural areas, as well as improve the quality of life for citizens who live in them;
2. Allow the grant to be used for common road, bridge, highway, or tunnel projects, expanding the eligibility for more projects in rural areas;
Strike the minimum project amount of \$25M, considering that a most projects in rural areas are under this amount;
3. Lower the cost-share burden for communities with populations less than 5,000, increasing the likelihood projects in these communities can be completed in a timely manner; and,
4. Establish a set-aside of at least 5% of funding under the program to go to communities of less than 5,000 in population, ensuring these communities receive federal assistance for their infrastructure needs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Washburn County Board of Supervisors that it supports the passage of the Rebuilding Rural Roads Act (H.R. 3002) and Protecting Infrastructure Investments for Rural America Act (H.R. 5437); and

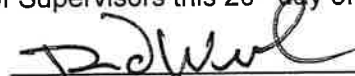
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Washburn County Board of Supervisors urges the Wisconsin Counties Association to support the passage of the Rebuilding Rural Roads Act (H.R. 3002) and Protecting Infrastructure Investments for Rural America Act (H.R. 5437); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Washburn County Clerk is directed to send copies of this resolution to Senator Ron Johnson, Senator Tammy Baldwin, Representative Tom Tiffany, and the Wisconsin Counties Association.

Recommended for adoption by the Washburn County Executive Committee this 13th day of August, 2024 and approved by the Washburn County Board of Supervisors this 20th day of August, 2024.



Tim Kessler, Chair




David Wilson, 1st Vice Chair



Lolita Olson, 2nd Vice Chair



Hank Graber, Member



Stephen Smith, Member

Motion: D. WILSON Second: C. MASTERJOHN

(Voice) (Roll) vote: Yes 21 No 0

I, Alicia Swearingen, as County Clerk, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the resolution adopted by the County of Washburn at the meeting held on: 8.20.2024

