

EPA and USDA Announce Continued Support

Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that will help rural water systems face the challenges of aging infrastructure, workforce shortages, increasing costs, limited management capacity and declining rate bases. Through this MOA, EPA and USDA will conduct joint activities to help rural water systems continue to provide access to safe drinking water and protect their water resources.

“Rural water systems play a key role in the lives of all Americans,” **said EPA Assistant Administrator for the Office of Water David Ross.** “Investing resources in rural system infrastructure and management supports EPA’s goal of ensuring that rural communities have the infrastructure necessary to become sustainable, protect public health and support the rural economy.”

“We are pleased to continue this important work with EPA to support rural water and waste infrastructure,” **said USDA Rural Utilities Service Administrator Chad Rupe.** “Under the leadership of President Trump and Agriculture Secretary Perdue, USDA is committed to working collaboratively with our federal partners to help rural systems thrive and serve their communities because when rural America thrives, all of America thrives.”

To ensure that rural systems have a strong foundation to address 21st century challenges, this MOA formalizes ongoing collaboration by EPA and USDA to help implement innovative strategies and tools so that these systems can achieve short- and long-term sustainability. This MOA focuses on four key areas. First, EPA and USDA will continue supporting sustainability and resilience by providing resources such as training and education to incorporate these strategies into utility management.

Second, the agencies will continue supporting water system partnerships, including by educating communities and utilities on the array of tools that are available to support partnerships that can increase sustainability. Third, actions under the MOA will also continue supporting the water sector workforce, in part by continuing to raise awareness of rural water sector careers through promotional initiatives. Finally, EPA and USDA will also continue supporting compliance with drinking water and clean water regulations, including by making these rural systems a funding priority.

This action supports EPA’s [50th anniversary celebration](#) and its February theme of protecting America’s waters—including surface water protection, safe drinking water and water infrastructure investments.

For more information visit: www.epa.gov/safewater.