

Mike Bloomberg's Agriculture Policy

Agriculture is the economic engine for thousands of rural communities, providing 11% of U.S. employment and the market foundation for businesses across rural America.² Farms and ranches [covering more than 900 million acres](#)³ contributed [more than \\$1 trillion to gross domestic product](#) in 2017.⁴ Americans have always looked to farmers to supply the food they need. In the 21st century, we also count on them to be responsible stewards of the land, to keep their soils healthy enough to filter the water, protect against pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and capture carbon dioxide from the air. Farmers are already engaged in this work, and it is the federal government's responsibility to support and encourage their efforts.

But farmers today face unprecedented challenges: Farmers have fewer and fewer buyers for their products, and they buy seed and other inputs from an increasingly limited number of sellers. Climate change is increasing the frequency of heavy rains,⁵ extreme heat, strong storms and droughts. (Last spring, more than 19 million acres of flooded farmland went unplanted.⁶) The farm economy remains sluggish, with prices for most crops and livestock products flat for the past four years.⁷ Farm debt is at an all-time high.⁸ And the average age of the American farmer keeps rising (it's nearing 58⁹) as young people, especially minorities and women, confront obstacles to starting and buying farms.

President Trump has made life harder for farmers by waging an ineffective trade war that [slashed](#) farm exports to China to \$7.3 billion in FY2019 (from \$22 billion in FY2017),¹⁰ contributing to a 24% [surge](#) in farm bankruptcies.¹¹ Soybeans, which make up [60%](#) of those exports, were hit hardest.¹² Trump's \$28 billion in direct payments to farmers may ease the pain for some in the short term, but the president has done significant damage to America's trade relationships and its reputation as a reliable trading partner. Rather than maintain the international markets farmers need to thrive, Trump has increased their dependence on public support.

Mike Bloomberg believes the federal government should support farmers, not throw up obstacles to their success. As president, he will:

1. Ensure fair competition in agriculture.

Mergers in recent decades have resulted in a few large companies dominating the agriculture industry. Four companies control 85% of the beef packing market, and a few big poultry processors command a market in which nine in 10 chickens are grown through contract farming.¹³ The seed business, which 40 years ago was run by thousands of small companies, is now dominated by four large firms.¹⁴ This

¹ USDA, [Ag and Food Sectors and the Economy](#), September 2019

² USDA, [Rural economies depend on different industries](#), October 2018

³ USDA, [Farms and Land in Farms](#), April 2019

⁴ USDA, [Agriculture, food, and related industries contributed more than \\$1 trillion to U.S. GDP in 2017](#), October 2018

⁵ National Climate Assessment, [Fourth National Climate Assessment Chapter 10: Agriculture and Rural Communities](#), 2018

⁶ USDA, [Report: Farmers Prevented from Planting Crops on More than 19 Million Acres](#), August 2019

⁷ USDA, [Highlights from the February 2020 Farm Income Forecast](#), February 2020

⁸ Time, ['They're Trying to Wipe Us Off the Map.' Small American Farmers Are Nearing Extinction](#), November 2019

⁹ Farm Progress, [Average age of U.S. farmer climbs to 57.5 years](#), April 2019

¹⁰ International Food Policy Research Institute, [Agricultural trade aid: Implications and consequences for US global trade relationships in the context of the World Trade Organization](#), 2019

¹¹ Bloomberg News, [U.S. Farm Bankruptcies Surge 24% on Strain From Trump Trade War](#), October 2019

¹² AEI, [Agricultural trade aid: Implications and consequences for US global trade relationships in the context of the World Trade Organization](#), November 2019

¹³ Open Markets Institute, [Food and Power: Addressing Monopolization in America's Food System](#), March 2019

¹⁴ Successful Farming, [What Farmers Can Expect from the Latest Round of Seed Company Mergers](#), June 2019

concentration stifles innovation, puts small farmers and livestock growers at a disadvantage and gives large companies outsized power over farmers' costs¹⁵ and prices.¹⁶ From 1995 to 2011, the cost of seed to plant one acre of soybeans and corn rose 325% and 259%, respectively, while yield per acre increased only 18.9% and 29.7% according to the Center for American Progress.¹⁷ To maintain a level playing field in agriculture, Mike will:

- **Require the Justice Department to subject mergers and acquisitions in the agriculture industry to greater scrutiny.** The Department will also review the competitive impact of recent mergers, such as the Dow-DuPont and Bayer-Monsanto combinations. This process will take into account monopolies' effects not only on consumers but also on small farmers.
- **Revive U.S. Department of Agriculture efforts to write rules aimed at protecting small farmers from unfair contracting practices.** In the 2008 farm bill, Congress amended the Packers and Stockyards Act to protect poultry and swine growers from unfair practices by meat processors, but lawmakers later blocked progress on the rules.¹⁸ Mike will work with Congress to ensure that the USDA continues progress on protecting small farmers from unfair contracting practices.
- **Reinstate the Grain Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Administration as an independent agency.** GIPSA is the USDA office responsible for protecting farmers against unfair practices.¹⁹ The Trump administration eliminated it as a standalone agency.²⁰ Mike's USDA will reinstate GIPSA, and ensure that it is both adequately funded and directed to effectively address anticompetitive practices.
- **Allow farmers to opt out of federal checkoff programs to promote their products.** Farmers are required to pay fees to support the promotion of their commodities (for example, the "Got Milk?" campaign). But some farmers are concerned that the money is spent in ways that aren't transparent. Mike will allow farmers to opt out of these programs, and endorse bipartisan legislation to require the programs to publish their budgets and be audited every five years.²¹
- **Streamline H-2A farm labor requirements.** The H-2A visa program allows U.S. farms to hire temporary foreign workers alongside domestic workers. But the visas can be difficult to access for farms with limited resources. Despite recent attempts to update the program,²² it still contains many bureaucratic hurdles. Mike will streamline H-2A farm labor requirements and consider exemptions for smaller farms, such as letting them pay the federal minimum wage or not cover housing. And he will work with Congress to make H-2A visas portable.

¹⁵ Texas A&M Agricultural and Food Policy Center, [Effects of Proposed Mergers and Acquisitions Among Biotechnology Firms on Seed Prices](#), September 2016

¹⁶ Washington Monthly, [How to Close the Democrats' Rural Gap](#), March 2019

¹⁷ Center for American Progress, [A Fair Deal for Farmers](#), May 2019

¹⁸ Congressional Research Service, [USDA's "GIPSA Rule" on Livestock and Poultry Marketing Practices](#), January 2016

¹⁹ ProPublica, [How a Top Chicken Company Cut Off Black Farmers, One by One](#), June 2019

²⁰ Civil Eats, [New Meatpacker Rules Won't Support or Protect Farmers](#), January 2020

²¹ Successful Farming, [Legislation To Reform Checkoffs Introduced In The House](#), January 2020

²² Labor Department, [Temporary Agricultural Employment of H-2A Nonimmigrants in the United States](#), accessed February 2019

2. Fix U.S. trade policy and expand agricultural markets.

American farmers have been hurt by tariffs levied in response to President Trump's trade war. Soybean exports have [fallen 22% since 2017](#).²³ With his latest truce, Trump promises agricultural exports to China will amount to \$40-50 billion/year, starting now.²⁴ That's unlikely,²⁵ given that the Chinese hog industry has been decimated by African swine virus (lowering demand for soybeans) and that the U.S. is facing increased competition from Brazil and other soybean-growing countries. Chinese soybean tariffs remain in place; Chinese companies buying soybeans now do so only under waivers.²⁶ To repair and improve U.S. trade policy, Mike will:

- **Prioritize cooperation with allies and the World Trade Organization.** Countries with shared trade objectives can negotiate more effectively when they work together. Mike will respond to China's unfair practices – high tariffs, subsidies, technology transfers – by leading international efforts to pressure the country to change its ways.
- **De-escalate U.S.-China trade tensions.** In negotiations with China, Mike will push for lower soybean, cotton and other tariffs, aiming to return as quickly as possible to robust trade with China for U.S. agricultural products.
- **Invest in the U.S. farm economy.** Mike will open new international and domestic markets for American farm products, providing farmers with market opportunities they can count on in the long run. Rather than mislead farmers about trade deals, as Trump has done, he will work on lasting agreements that ensure stable markets. He will help farmers diversify to meet consumer food demands, and create new revenue streams in addressing climate change.

3. Expand research and development in agriculture.

The U.S. has a long tradition of excellence in agricultural research. Robust scientific investments have ensured the competitiveness of American farmers, and a continued focus on R&D is essential to maintaining U.S. agricultural leadership. At the same time, expanded efforts to better understand soil management can improve actions to fight climate change at home and abroad.

- **At least double the federal investment in agricultural research.** The U.S. spends \$2.5 billion a year on agricultural research²⁷ – not enough to fund needed investigations into animal viruses (including those that can infect humans), food contamination, water conservation, emissions reduction and other long-term challenges.²⁸ The USDA funds only 15% of its peer-reviewed grant requests. Businesses also invest in science, but their research tends to focus on short-term product development.²⁹ China now outspends the U.S. two-to-one on agriculture research.³⁰ To ensure that agriculture is prepared to sustainably meet long-term future food production demands, Mike will double federal spending on research, as a consortium of universities,

²³ American Enterprise Institute, [Agricultural trade aid: Implications and consequences for US global trade relationships in the context of the World Trade Organization](#), November 2019

²⁴ Bloomberg News, [Trade Truce Offers Farm Relief But How Much Is Still Unclear](#), January 2020

²⁵ Wall Street Journal, [The Dog That Didn't Bark: What Soybean Prices Say About Trade Deal](#), January 2020

²⁶ Reuters, Factbox: [How China tariffs on U.S. commodities, energy stand after Phase 1 trade deal](#), January 2020

²⁷ Farm Bureau, [Investing in the Future of Farming](#), September 2019

²⁸ Supporters of Agricultural Research, [Why Support Ag Research?](#)

²⁹ Missourian, [Public science for private interests: How MU agricultural research cultivates profits for industry](#), October 2019

³⁰ AgriPulse, [Opinion: FEAR Is a New Model for Food and Ag Research](#), June 2017

scientific groups and growers' associations has recommended.³¹ And he will improve the quality of agricultural science by increasing the share of research spending that goes through a competitive grant process.

4. Help farmers build healthy soils and work toward net-zero emissions in agriculture.

Farming practices that improve soil health and prevent erosion – cover crops, no-till farming, crop rotation and so on – also reduce pollution and emissions, improve resilience to flooding and extreme heat and sequester carbon.³² If widely used, “regenerative” practices could [lower U.S. emissions by 150 million metric tons a year](#)³³ (equivalent to *not* burning 800,000 railcar-loads of coal³⁴) and sequester carbon from the air.³⁵ To support and encourage farmers in their ongoing efforts to improve soil health and reduce pollution and emissions, Mike will:

- **Expand funding for USDA conservation programs.** The federal government spends \$6 billion a year to encourage conservation³⁶ through several programs, including the Agriculture Conservation Easement Program,³⁷ the Conservation Reserve Program,³⁸ the Environmental Quality Incentives Program³⁹ and the Conservation Stewardship Program.⁴⁰ All these programs work well, but they are oversubscribed. Mike will expand their funding, and provide the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service with the staff resources it needs to deliver the programs, including technical support for farmers.
- **Investigate ways to align crop insurance with conservation incentives.** The U.S. spends \$9 billion a year to subsidize crop insurance to protect farmers against weather disasters and market downturns. This support is tied to minimal conservation: Farmers may not plant in wetlands or on erodible land without an approved conservation plan.⁴¹ But subsidies are not linked to conservation on all land. And crop insurance can be an inducement to farming marginal lands, leading to increased runoff. Iowa has a successful pilot project that lowers insurance premiums for farmers who practice conservation.⁴² Mike's USDA will explore ways to similarly align crop insurance with best farming practices, such as planting cover crops to improve soil health.
- **Support private-sector emissions trading programs by setting measurement standards and collecting data.** U.S. cropland has the [potential to sequester 1.5-5 billion metric tons of greenhouse gases a year](#)⁴³ if farmers follow regenerative practices. Private efforts are underway to pay farmers for sequestering carbon – by buying credits from them that can be sold to industrial polluters.⁴⁴ These efforts are critical to ensuring that farmers profit from their efforts to restore soils, and Mike will support them by setting standards for measuring sequestration and

³¹ Sustainable Agriculture, [Letter to Congress](#), October 2017

³² Inside Climate News, [After a Rough Year, Farmers and Congress Are Talking About Climate Solutions](#), 2019

³³ AEI, Agricultural trade aid: [Implications and consequences for US global trade relationships in the context of the World Trade Organization](#), November 2019

³⁴ EPA, [Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator](#), December 2019

³⁵ UC Davis, [A Climate Change Solution Beneath Our Feet](#), May 2017

³⁶ USDA, [The fate of expiring Conservation Reserve Program acreage varied with its conservation practice](#), accessed February 2019

³⁷ National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, [Conserving wetlands, grassland, and farm and ranch land through long-term conservation easements](#), accessed February 2019

³⁸ NSAC, [Helping farmers and ranchers share the costs of addressing natural resource concerns](#), accessed February 2019

³⁹ NSAC, [Helping farmers and ranchers share the costs of addressing natural resource concerns](#), accessed February 2019

⁴⁰ NSAC, [Rewarding farmers for adopting and managing advanced conservation systems](#), accessed February 2019

⁴¹ USDA, [5 Steps to Conservation Compliance](#), accessed February 2019

⁴² Iowa Farm Bureau, [Crop insurance discount available for planting cover crops in Iowa](#), September 2019

⁴³ Dr. Jennifer Moore-Kucera, [Testimony to the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis](#), October 2019

⁴⁴ Indigo Ag, [What if a healthier planet began with a healthier farm?](#), accessed February 2019

collecting the relevant data. He will also support Senator Michael Bennet's legislation⁴⁵ to provide additional tax credits as needed for farmers, ranchers, local governments and tribes that sequester carbon.

- **Restore the Obama Waters of the United States rules, and help farmers comply with them.** President Trump's recent change to the Waters of the United States rule weakens 50-year-old protections against pollution for streams, wetlands and groundwater, allowing contaminants like phosphorus, nitrates and animal waste into waterways, against scientific advice.⁴⁶ Yet clean wetlands and streams are critical to the health of farmland, and when farmers maintain healthy soils, it's possible to safely use fertilizers and pesticides in moderation. Mike will restore the WOTUS rules in a way that maintains the economic vitality of farms – without over-regulating – and help farmers comply with reasonable restrictions.
- **Strengthen the environmental safety of confined animal feeding operations.** When CAFOs fail to follow state and local regulations⁴⁷ and clean water rules, they can release animal waste and bacteria into the water supply.⁴⁸ Combined with pesticide and fertilizer runoff, this pollutes waterways, creating dead zones where rivers feed into the ocean.⁴⁹ Mike will help improve CAFO safety by measuring the problem, working with states on uniform regulations and increasing research on low-chemical methods of livestock management.
- **Use USDA conservation incentive programs to target reductions in nitrous oxide and methane.** Mike's USDA will support dairies and other livestock operations in their efforts, for example, to develop and use equipment to trap methane emissions.⁵⁰ And he will increase funding for innovative research into new ways of capturing methane.
- **Reform the Renewable Fuel Standard to make it a national Low Carbon Fuel Standard.** The U.S. has a Renewable Fuel Standard⁵¹ that requires ethanol and other advanced biofuels to be blended into gasoline, but it has no national low-carbon or clean fuel standard for all stages of the transportation-fuel supply chain. Mike will create a national Low Carbon Fuel Standard to reduce emissions from the production, distribution and use of transport fuels, modeled on the LCFS that California and several other states have adopted.⁵²

5. Invest in the future with fair farm subsidies, efforts to build a diverse new generation of farmers and extensive agricultural research.

The average age of American farmers has risen to nearly 58 years.⁵³ Despite a recent uptick, the number of farmers 35 years old or younger remains low.⁵⁴ Many young people cannot afford to start new farms or take over old ones. And in some families, it can be difficult to pass farmland to the next generation because the legalities of estate planning are complex.⁵⁵ Only 1.5% of farmers are Black (down from

⁴⁵ Senator Bennet, [Bennet, King, Phillips Introduce Bill to Promote Ranked Choice Voting](#), accessed February 2019

⁴⁶ NY Times, [Trump Removes Pollution Controls on Streams and Wetlands](#), January 2020

⁴⁷ County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, [CAFO Regulations](#), accessed February 2019

⁴⁸ EPA, [Protecting Water Quality from Agriculture Runoff](#), accessed February 2019

⁴⁹ Science Alert, [Scientists Predict Giant 'Dead Zone' the Size of Massachusetts in the Gulf of Mexico](#), June 2019

⁵⁰ Bloomberg Opinion, [California's Holy-Cow Idea](#), December 2017

⁵¹ U.S. Energy Information Administration, [How much ethanol is in gasoline, and how does it affect fuel economy?](#), May 2019

⁵² California Air Resources Board, [Low Carbon Fuel Standard](#), accessed February 2019

⁵³ USDA, [Farm Products: Revised census questions provide expanded demographic information](#), 2017

⁵⁴ Civil Eats, [Despite Many Challenges, the U.S. Has More Young Farmers Than it Did Five Years Ago](#), April 2019

⁵⁵ Iowa State University, [Good Farm Policy: Avoid these top 10 estate planning mistakes](#), June 2018

15% in 1920), and Black farmers own only 0.5% of U.S. farmland.⁵⁶ To help ensure an economically lively and inclusive future for agriculture, Mike will:

- **Expand USDA’s microloan program for small and first-time farmers.** Mike will allow Americans with less than three years’ farm experience to access Farm Ownership Loans, and double the loan maximum to \$100,000.⁵⁷
- **Establish a farm succession and estate planning division at the USDA.** The Agriculture Department has begun to study ways to make it easier for farmers to pass along their operations and lands, and this work needs to continue. Also, lack of clear deeds causes protracted legal disputes.⁵⁸ From 1920 to 1997, 98% of Black farm owners were forced from their properties because they lacked ownership documents.⁵⁹ Mike will address this problem for all farmers by establishing a division at the USDA to help families transfer or hand down their farms. He will also create a pilot program modeled on Maine Farmland Trust⁶⁰ to enable young farmers to lease-to-own land from retiring farmers.
- **Appoint USDA leadership committed to civil rights and helping black farmers.** The USDA acknowledges its role in creating America’s inequity between white and Black farms.⁶¹ But discriminatory practices haven’t ended. From 2001–2008, 14,000 civil rights complaints were filed against the USDA on practices including racism in program delivery and discrimination against farmers of color. To build minority farmers’ trust in the USDA, Mike will authorize an independent investigation to find out what reforms are needed and carry them out. He will conduct regular audits to ensure that Black farmers have equal access to USDA grants and programs. And he will work with Congress to extend the statute of limitations on civil rights suits.
- **Increase funding for the USDA’s Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program, commonly known as the 2501 program.** These programs provide opportunities in agriculture for African Americans, Latino and other minorities.⁶²
- **Encourage states to pass the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act.**⁶³ Many Black landowners in the Jim Crow South did not make wills,⁶⁴ so their descendants inherited land without clear titles – land designated as “heir’s property” – which has prevented those heirs from getting mortgages or doing extensive home repairs. When there are multiple descendants, any individual descendant can sign off on a sale of the land.⁶⁵ The Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act would allow heirs to buy out other heirs before a court can force a sale and, if a sale happens, ensure that it maximizes financial return. Mike will also increase funding for legal organizations that help heir’s property owners.⁶⁶

⁵⁶ USDA, [Farm Products – Revised census questions provide expanded demographic information](#), April 2019

⁵⁷ USDA, [Farm Loans Fact Sheet](#), February 2016

⁵⁸ Farm Journal, [6 Reasons Why Estate Planning is Different for Farmers](#), August 2018

⁵⁹ The Atlantic, [The Great Land Robbery](#), September 2019

⁶⁰ Maine Farmland Trust, [Farmland Access](#), accessed February 2019

⁶¹ USDA, [A Time to Act](#), January 1998

⁶² USDA, [The 2501 Program](#), accessed February 2019

⁶³ American Bar Association, [The Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act](#), October 2016

⁶⁴ Pew, [Heirs Property Challenges Families, States](#), July 2015

⁶⁵ ProPublica, [Their Family Bought Land One Generation After Slavery. The Reels Brothers Spent Eight Years in Jail for Refusing to Leave It](#), July 2019

⁶⁶ Successful Farming, [Senate To Vote On Funding For ‘Heirs Property’ Initiative](#), July 2019

- **Expand farmworker protections to include minimum wage, overtime and other standard labor rights, as well as protection against harassment.** Farmworkers are still excluded from some federal protections, including protections against being fired for joining, organizing or supporting a labor union. Mike will ensure that farmworkers are protected from abuse and unfair labor conditions.

6. Boost rural economies.

After shrinking for decades, the population of rural America has begun to increase a little – 0.1% in 2016-17.⁶⁷ Yet rural communities face special challenges in trying to provide good health care and economic opportunities for small populations. To help them maintain high-quality public services, Mike will:

- **Pay rural hospitals a fixed amount to manage the care of all Medicare beneficiaries in their area.** This will give the hospitals predictable budgets and, with safeguards to ensure quality, help them lower costs and improve outcomes. Mike will also measure those outcomes. And to further expand access to good medical care, he will:
 - Make freestanding emergency departments and clinics eligible for enhanced Medicare reimbursement, as critical-access hospitals are.
 - Increase federal grants to Community Health Centers,⁶⁸ which provide free or low-cost care, including mental health services, substance use disorder treatment and dental health services in rural areas.
 - Require Medicare to cover all reasonable telehealth services, and abolish facility fees when patients get telehealth care at home.
- **Improve screening and treatment for depression.** Rural mental-health professionals and researchers report increasing depression and thoughts of suicide among American farmers.⁶⁹ But most suicides are preventable. The Farm and Ranch Assistance Network is a \$2 million USDA pilot program that connects farmers to assistance programs and shares best practices to address stress.⁷⁰ Mike will assess the program’s effectiveness and ensure it has adequate funding to help as many farmers as can benefit. He will improve screening for depression in primary care, improve suicide screening and prevention in mental-health specialty settings, and increase federal support for state and local suicide prevention efforts. What’s more, he will strengthen firearm safety in the U.S.
- **Expand broadband access by leveraging private-sector investments.** Some 21 million Americans lacked a broadband connection at the end of 2017, according to the FCC.⁷¹ Mike will auction subsidies to bidders that build high-speed networks in rural communities, including cable companies, electric cooperatives and municipalities. And he will direct the Federal Communications Commission to authorize sharing unused C-band spectrum with rural internet

⁶⁷ USDA, [Rural Population Trends](#), 2019

⁶⁸ CDC, [Community Health Center Strengthening](#), March 2018

⁶⁹ Farm Aid, [Farm Aid to Agriculture Subcommittees: Fully fund the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network](#), March 2019

⁷⁰ USDA, [Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network \(FRSAN\)](#)

⁷¹ FCC, [2019 BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT REPORT](#), May 2019

service providers to offer “wireless fiber.” Mike’s goal is to expand broadband access to 10 million more Americans by 2025 and to all by 2030.

- **Provide economic opportunities for people who want to remain in their rural communities.** Population growth in rural America has lagged that of urban and suburban areas. The share of Americans living in rural counties has fallen to 14% (from 16% in 2000), even though a majority of U.S. counties are rural.⁷² Mike will provide an added incentive for businesses to locate and employ people in distressed communities, through a place-based Earned Income Tax Credit that lowers costs for employers. And he will empower a single authority to coordinate the various federal programs that provide assistance to distressed communities, and offer community leaders a single point of contact.
- **Expand the Small Business Administration’s Community Advantage program to support rural entrepreneurs.** This program is targeted at new businesses created by entrepreneurs from underrepresented groups.
- **Preserve and increase funding for Essential Air Service.** President Trump has proposed cutting the Essential Air Service, a vital program to keep rural and small communities connected.⁷³ Mike will preserve and increase funding for Essential Air Service, and promote regional air hub initiatives to spur development outside large metro areas. And to encourage the growth of bus service as a cost-effective option for 200-300-mile trips,⁷⁴ he will expand BUILD program eligibility to include intercity bus operators.
- **Invest \$100 billion over 10 years to ensure clean drinking water.** One in five rural wells are contaminated.⁷⁵ And many areas can’t afford needed equipment to filter out dangerous chemicals.⁷⁶ Mike will deliver \$175 million over five years for the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act program, to accelerate local investment in water infrastructure. To ensure a long-term commitment to protecting water supplies, he will increase the EPA Clean Water State Revolving Fund and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund to \$6.6 billion annually (as part of the \$100 billion investment). And he will restore funding to \$1 billion for the Agriculture Department’s Water and Waste Disposal grant.

⁷² Pew, [Demographic and economic trends in urban, suburban and rural communities](#), May 2018

⁷³ Denver Post, [Trump budget targets flight program that links small towns to “the outside world.”](#) June 2017

⁷⁴ TR News, [The Decline and Revival of Intercity Bus Service](#), May-June 2016

⁷⁵ NY Times, [Rural America’s Own Private Flint: Polluted Water Too Dangerous to Drink](#), November 2018

⁷⁶ USA Today, [63 million Americans exposed to unsafe drinking water](#), August 2017