



# RESILIENT LOUISIANA COMMISSION

CO-CHAIR DON PIERSON

CO-CHAIR TERRIE STERLING

## Rural Development Task Force

May 7, 2020

Meeting Called to order at 10 a.m.

### Task Force Members

- Ben Nevers
- Jim Clinton
- Harper Amrstrong
- Noble Ellington
- Scott Huntsman
- Valerie Aymond Long
- Henry Cotton
- Linda Sparks Curtis
- Milton Ceasar
- Conni Castille
- Leslie Durham
- Dr. Orlando McMeans
- David Sickey

### *Preliminary Recommendations*

The Rural Development Task Force held its first meeting on Thursday, May 7, 2020 with broad participation and thoughtful feedback. While the task force acknowledges that it has much more work to do to present a comprehensive and coherent set of recommendations, the following points represent the Task Force's Preliminary Recommendations:

- The covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the critical and urgent need to bring full, affordable, and easily accessible broadband service to our rural communities. The current and historic lack of this infrastructure is a barrier to economic development and opportunity; public health; telework; education; public safety; and quality of life. Addressing it can neither be ignored nor postponed.
- Rural towns and small cities will need significant help in surviving the tax shortfalls attendant to the epidemic.
- Rural communities need reliable funding and support for infrastructure projects.
- Covid-19 testing availability has been slow to become available in rural regions. This is a threat to public health and a barrier for those small businesses trying to reopen safely.
- Rural hospitals, pharmacies, and other health-care related services (including mental health) must be maintained and enhanced.
- Among the areas of opportunity that the Task Force will consider are outdoor recreation, reshoring manufacturing operations, food system protection and enhancement, and entrepreneurship.

