



# Maryland Farm Bureau<sup>®</sup>

## ISSUES FACT SHEET

### Rural Broadband

#### ISSUE

Rural broadband is essential to modern agriculture, the farmers who grow our food, and the quality of life to rural Americans.

#### BACKGROUND

Rural broadband provides access to global markets and allows for the use of precision agriculture. Farmers rely on this technology to follow commodity markets, communicate with customers, and to ensure regulatory compliance.

According to the Federal Communications Commission<sup>1</sup>, 5.2% of Marylanders living in rural areas lack access to 25 Mbps/3 Mbps compared to 2.0% of urban residents. The counties with the least available access include Garrett (26.7%), Allegany (11.4%), Charles (8.0%), and Talbot (7.9%).

The United States Department of Agriculture reports<sup>2</sup> that 23% of Maryland farms don't have reliable internet access. The report also identifies satellite as the most common method for farm owners to access internet.

In 2019, Governor Larry Hogan announced a \$9.9 million funding package to provide reliable internet access for 225,000 Marylanders in rural communities. This funding is part of the first wave of a five-year plan.

#### POSITION

Maryland Farm Bureau supports the expansion of broadband service to underserved rural areas.

<sup>1</sup> *Federal Communications Commission, 2019 Broadband Deployment Report*

<sup>2</sup> *USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, Farm Computer Usage and Ownership Report*

For more information, visit [mdfarmbureau.com/rural-broadband](https://mdfarmbureau.com/rural-broadband).