



# Rural Power

Iowa's electric  
cooperatives

Energizing rural  
economic growth

## Iowa Rural Power Candidate Questionnaire

*Candidates can provide answers via video message, "op-ed" style submission, or another written form of response. Responses will be shared in their entirety with the member-consumers of Iowa's electric cooperatives and posted on [www.iaruralpower.org](http://www.iaruralpower.org).*

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Examples of questions most relevant to our members are:

1. How much interaction do you have with electric cooperatives in Iowa?
  - I and my staff speak with the electric coops regularly, focusing both on what coops and their members need in terms of infrastructure and financial support to keep bills down, as well as the ongoing efforts to bridge the digital divide and bring high speed internet access to all Iowans.
2. How will your energy plans provide affordable and reliable power to rural Iowa?
  - The coops that have been so critical in bringing electric power to much of rural America are a key part of any energy plan, and that has to continue so that rural communities aren't left behind. I'll continue to work to make sure they have a place at the table going forward through bills like the RURAL Act, which made sure coops wouldn't have to choose between their tax status and taking disaster funding to rebuild after flooding like we saw last year.
3. Iowa's electric cooperatives are successful proponents of renewable energy resources in our state. However, obstacles remain for shifting to a 100% renewable portfolio, such as extreme weather patterns, source intermittency, and limits on battery storage technology. Simply put, how will your energy plan compensate for electricity needs in February when the sun isn't shining, the wind isn't blowing, and battery storage options are limited due to their current performance in colder temperatures?
  - Iowans know that wind and solar are an essential part of the future energy mix, but that doesn't mean it's the only part of the solution. We'll need ongoing investment into new and improved technologies to better work with those, whether it's better batteries and a more efficient energy grid or new power generation technologies that can lower emissions.
4. Co-ops across the country are able to deliver electric service to rural areas in part due to low-cost financing from the USDA's Rural Utilities Service. Allowing borrowers to refinance RUS debt would help make up for the expected \$10 billion loss nationwide due to COVID-19 and allow essential rural utilities to be a part of the long-term recovery for our members-consumers. It is estimated that \$200 million dollars in savings would be realized in Iowa alone. If elected, would you support

or cosponsor the Flexible Financing for Rural America Act (H.R. 7483/S. 4152) to allow borrowers to refinance their RUS loans without penalty?

- Absolutely. I'm already a cosponsor of this in order to help defray the financial hit that coops and their members are taking from COVID-19.

5. Iowa co-ops pride themselves on being champions for their community and leaders in economic development. Through the Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant Program (REDLG) through the USDA, electric co-ops have helped bring millions of dollars in investment to rural Iowa. How will you work to strengthen the REDLG program in the next Farm Bill and beyond?

- Yes. Programs like this to support rural communities in Iowa are a major part of why I'm proud to be Iowa's representative on the House Agriculture Committee, and I'm looking forward to getting to work on the next Farm Bill in that role.

6. What other ideas on strengthening rural Iowa, such as support for the biofuels industry, are unique to your campaign that would be of interest to electric cooperative member-consumers?

- I've been a vocal advocate for the biofuels industry since day one, and worked throughout last year to ensure an extension of both the biodiesel and 2<sup>nd</sup> gen biofuels tax credits last December.
- In addition, I think broadband expansion is a role that the electric coops will continue to play a major role in. I worked for more than a year with the House Whip's Rural Broadband Task Force to craft the Accessible, Affordable, Internet for All Act, which provided \$85 billion of new funding to deploy high-speed internet to all Americans. The bill, which is supported by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, would also provide \$9 billion for expanded subsidies for low income families to afford broadband, which has become increasingly critical during the COVID-19 pandemic.

***Please email candidate responses to Haley Moon ([hmoon@iowarec.org](mailto:hmoon@iowarec.org)).***