TEMPLATE LETTER – PLEASE PLACE ON HOSPITAL LETTERHEAD AND ADD ANY HOSPITAL-SPECIFIC DETAILS YOU THINK MIGHT BE HELPFUL

February XX, 2024

**Subject:** **Rural Health Care Facilities Revitalization Act (H.R. 5989)**

Dear [INSERT RECIPIENT]:

The millions of Californians who rely on rural hospitals for life-saving and life-changing care are at risk of losing access to these vital services.

Many small and rural hospitals have seen their operating margin drop by a frightening 8% from 2019 to 2023. This is a national trend. Between January 2013 and February 2020, more than 100 rural hospitals closed, including two in California — Corcoran District Hospital and Madera Community Hospital.

NAME OF YOUR HOSPITAL does not serve a rural community, but as part of an interconnected network of health care providers throughout California, we intuitively recognize the great and pressing need to preserve care in these areas.

When a rural hospital closes, those in poor health, seniors, and people experiencing poverty suffer the most (the national median poverty rate for rural communities with a hospital closure is 13%). In addition, residents are forced to travel greater distances just to access the most common health care services.

These residents will need to receive their care at other hospitals — ones like NAME OF YOUR HOSPITAL that stand ready to serve, but are already stretched to their limit as they face workforce shortages, negative operating margins, and patients who increasingly need complex care for advanced disease.

INSERT ANY HOSPITAL-SPECIFIC DETAILS THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL

We write today to ask for your support and cosponsorship of the Rural Health Care Facilities Revitalization Act (H.R. 5989), which would allow Community Facility Loans and loan guarantees under the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to be used by rural health care facilities.

This funding will help keep hospital doors open to serve rural communities across the country and in California. The USDA has helped many rural hospitals stay open via their Rural Development Program. H.R. 5989 makes minor adjustments to this existing, proven, and cost-effective program that will make a major difference.

SIGNATURE LINE