



# Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

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## **BAUCUS CALLS FOR DOUBLING OF RURAL PHILANTHROPY FUNDS**

*Address to Council on Foundations urges more dollars for rural projects, communities*

*Washington, DC* – U.S. Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.), Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee, today challenged the nation’s philanthropic foundations to double their funding to rural America during the next five years. Baucus spoke this morning at the Council on Foundations’ 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Pittsburgh, Pa. In his remarks, Baucus described a “rural philanthropic divide” that has put rural states – like his own home state of Montana – at the bottom of foundations’ funding lists. He encouraged foundations to assess their current level of rural funding today, and asked foundations that have not funded rural projects in the past to commit five to ten percent of their funds to rural grants.

**“Big cities have a wealth of people, expertise, and money that benefit the rural areas of their states. Entirely rural states without large metropolitan areas need an extra infusion of resources to keep up,”** said Baucus. **“Rural America is calling on foundations to give greater attention, and creative trailblazers are already showing how effective rural philanthropy can be.”**

Baucus cited advances such as Montana’s Tax Credit for Planned Gifts to Qualified Endowments, and the positive effects of an ongoing Kellogg Foundation investment for a Montana program. Kellogg’s funds were leveraged into tax help for nearly 4,000 taxpayers this year, and an accompanying education effort made Montanans aware of their eligibility for tax credits that provided first-time refunds to many lower-income taxpayers. Kellogg is now making an additional \$400,000 commitment to Montana, the Dakotas and Wyoming for a similar program. Baucus also noted how grants as small as \$1,000 can make an enormous difference for smaller rural efforts. He promised that he would work on the Senate Finance Committee, which has exclusive Senate jurisdiction over tax laws for charitable giving, to coordinate rural funding efforts, to increase participation by Federal agencies, and to facilitate foundation efforts.

In response to Baucus’s speech, the National Rural Funders Collaborative (NRFC) was expected to echo Baucus’s call to the larger foundation community.

**“Sen. Baucus’ challenge is timely and should inspire all of us to renew our commitment and devote new resources to rural communities,”** said Jim Richardson, NRFC executive director.

**“I realize that the challenge that I make today may be a stretch for many foundations. But I encourage folks to go to talk with rural community leaders and innovators, and learn why and how grant making needs to be different in rural America,”** said Baucus. **“I also recommend that foundations have at least one person from a rural area on their grant-making staff, and recruit a rural leader for their board. There are many resources to help you make this stretch, and I will join with you to bridge this rural divide.”**

The text of Baucus’s remarks can be found at <http://finance.senate.gov/sitepages/baucus.htm>.

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