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WASHINGTON, D.C., Jan. 21 -- U.S. Senator Bob Dole (R-Kans.) today called for immediate Senate action on the Rural Telephone Bank bill which he introduced last session.

The bill, cosponsored by 13 other Senators, was reported favorably by the Senate Agriculture Committee today.

The proposed bank would be similar to the Federal Land Bank and initially be under the supervision of the Secretary of Agriculture, to be ultimately converted to non-federal ownership with operation and control by its borrowers.

Currently rural telephone companies borrow funds directly from the government. Eligible borrowers pay a two percent interest rate.

"While the original Rural Electrification Administration loan program has meant much to rural America," Dole said, "applications for funds far outnumber the amount of money available. Other sources of financing must be found to meet the credit needs of rural telephone companies and cooperatives."

Under the Dole proposal, telephone systems which could afford to pay higher interest rates would borrow directly from the Telephone bank. Smaller systems unable to pay higher interest rates would be eligible for the two percent financing.