



STATE OF TENNESSEE
PROCLAMATION

BY THE GOVERNOR

WHEREAS, Tennessee cooperatives improve the well-being of rural residents and communities across our state by providing electric, internet and telephone services to homes, farms and rural businesses; financing for land, assets and inputs; products and services including genetics and seed, nutrients and feed, crop protection and health, equipment and fuel, for growing and marketing crops and livestock; and insurance for individuals and family businesses, resulting in employment for thousands of Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, Tennesseans are currently served by some 200 cooperatives through more than 6,000 employees, working together to impact our state's economy by more than \$1.2 billion, supporting schools and local infrastructure through tax contributions, enhancing our commitment to and focus on rural economies, shaping and empowering our state's future; and

WHEREAS, rural cooperatives are an important partner with today's farmers as they work diligently to produce safe, abundant, dependable and affordable food and fiber for both a rapidly growing world population and an increasingly interconnected and proactively health conscious local consumer; and

WHEREAS, the cooperative business model illustrates the very best of the American way through members who choose to share in successes and participate in local, democratic, community ownership, and representation, where shared profits are distributed by reducing costs of products and services, supporting community events/relief efforts or by providing patronage refunds; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Council of Cooperatives functions as the state's flagship organization for coordinating, promoting, educating and extending cooperative development in Tennessee, often serving as a clearinghouse for the open exchange of information and experiences among cooperative businesses, a sounding board for new ideas, and a forum for discovery, discussion, and dissemination of information, resulting in the affordable application of the most beneficial technologies and initiatives to our communities; and

WHEREAS, The Tennessee Council of Cooperatives is positioned to be a springboard to introduce and implement plans and programs relevant to cooperatives by sponsoring six college scholarships for agricultural students at each of Tennessee's four-year universities with agricultural programs, and hosting an annual leadership conference with emphasis on cooperatives for approximately 500 young leaders across the state, in addition to providing leadership, cooperation, supporting the Tennessee FFA Cooperative Challenge and support to various other programs, seminars and conferences; and

WHEREAS, today more than 75 percent of Tennessee's rural residents are served by a cooperative; and

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee recognizes it is in Tennessee's best interest to keep the cooperative spirit alive in its citizens through education about how cooperative business benefits them, ensuring support of cooperatives as they work with their members to supply rural economies with access to products and services necessary for success in the future;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bill Lee, Governor of the State of Tennessee, do hereby proclaim October 2021 as

Cooperative Month

in Tennessee and encourage all citizens to join me in this worthy observance.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the official seal of the State of Tennessee to be affixed at Nashville on this twenty-seventh day of August, 2021.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Lee".

Governor

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Ruggitt".

Secretary of State

