

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 654

To amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to reauthorize technical assistance to small public water systems, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 13, 2013

Mr. HARPER (for himself, Mr. MATHESON, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. JONES, Mr. NUNNELEE, Mr. FORTENBERRY, and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to reauthorize technical assistance to small public water systems, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Grassroots Rural and
5 Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

8 (1) the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments
9 of 1996 (Public Law 104–182) authorized technical

1 assistance for small and rural communities to assist
2 those communities in complying with regulations
3 promulgated pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water
4 Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.);

5 (2) technical assistance and compliance train-
6 ing—

7 (A) ensures that Federal regulations do
8 not overwhelm the resources of small and rural
9 communities; and

10 (B) provides small and rural communities
11 lacking technical resources with the necessary
12 skills to improve and protect water resources;

13 (3) across the United States, more than 90 per-
14 cent of the community water systems serve a popu-
15 lation of less than 10,000 individuals;

16 (4) small and rural communities have the great-
17 est difficulty providing safe, affordable public drink-
18 ing water and wastewater services due to limited
19 economies of scale and lack of technical expertise;
20 and

21 (5) in addition to being the main source of com-
22 pliance assistance, small and rural water technical
23 assistance has been the main source of emergency
24 response assistance in small and rural communities.

1 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

2 It is the sense of Congress that—

3 (1) to most effectively assist small and rural
4 communities, the Environmental Protection Agency
5 should prioritize the types of technical assistance
6 that are most beneficial to those communities, based
7 on input from those communities; and

8 (2) local support is the key to making Federal
9 assistance initiatives work in small and rural com-
10 munities to the maximum benefit.

11 **SEC. 4. FUNDING PRIORITIES.**

12 Section 1442(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42
13 U.S.C. 300j–1(e)) is amended—

14 (1) by designating the first through seventh
15 sentences as paragraphs (1) through (7), respec-
16 tively;

17 (2) in paragraph (5) (as so designated), by
18 striking “1997 through 2003” and inserting “2014
19 through 2019”; and

20 (3) by adding at the end the following:

21 “(8) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.—

22 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator
23 may use amounts made available to carry out
24 this subsection to provide technical assistance
25 to nonprofit organizations that provide to small
26 public water systems onsite technical assistance,

1 circuit-rider technical assistance programs, on-
2 site and regional training, assistance with im-
3 plementing source water protection plans, and
4 assistance with implementing monitoring plans,
5 rules, regulations, and water security enhance-
6 ments.

7 “(B) PREFERENCE.—To ensure that tech-
8 nical assistance funding under this subsection is
9 used in a manner that is most beneficial to the
10 small and rural communities of a State, the Ad-
11 ministrator shall give preference under this
12 paragraph to nonprofit organizations that, as
13 determined by the Administrator, are the most
14 qualified and experienced and that the small
15 public water systems in that State find to be
16 the most beneficial and effective.”.

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