

Union Calendar No. 264

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 611

[Report No. 114-346]

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 10, 2015

Referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

NOVEMBER 19, 2015

Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union
and ordered to be printed

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

14 (2) technical assistance and compliance train-
15 ing—

16 (A) ensures that Federal regulations do
17 not overwhelm the resources of small and rural
18 communities; and

19 (B) provides small and rural communities
20 lacking technical resources with the necessary
21 skills to improve and protect water resources;

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

1 (4) small and rural communities have the great-
2 est difficulty providing safe, affordable public drink-
3 ing water and wastewater services due to limited
4 economies of scale and lack of technical expertise;
5 and

6 (5) in addition to being the main source of com-
7 pliance assistance, small and rural water technical
8 assistance has been the main source of emergency
9 response assistance in small and rural communities.

10 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

11 It is the sense of Congress that—

12 (1) to assist small and rural communities most
13 effectively, the Administrator of the Environmental
14 Protection Agency should prioritize the types of
15 technical assistance that are most beneficial to those
16 communities, based on input from those commu-
17 nities; and

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

21 **SEC. 4. FUNDING PRIORITIES.**

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

1 (1) by designating the first through seventh
2 sentences as paragraphs (1) through (7), respec-
3 tively;

4 (2) in paragraph (5) (as so designated), by
5 striking “1997 through 2003” and inserting “2015
6 through 2020”; and

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

8 “(8) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.—

9 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator
10 may use amounts made available to carry out
11 this section to provide grants or cooperative
12 agreements to nonprofit organizations that pro-
13 vide to small public water systems onsite tech-
14 nical assistance, circuit-rider technical assist-
15 ance programs, multistate, regional technical
16 assistance programs, onsite and regional train-
17 ing, assistance with implementing source water
18 protection plans, and assistance with imple-
19 menting monitoring plans, rules, regulations,
20 and water security enhancements.

21 “(B) PREFERENCE.—To ensure that tech-
22 nical assistance funding is used in a manner
23 that is most beneficial to the small and rural
24 communities of a State, the Administrator shall
25 give preference under this paragraph to non-

1 profit organizations that, as determined by the
2 Administrator, are the most qualified and expe-
3 rienced in providing training and technical as-
4 sistance to small public water systems and that
5 the small community water systems in that
6 State find to be the most beneficial and effec-
7 tive.

8 “(C) LIMITATION.—No grant or coopera-
9 tive agreement provided or otherwise made
10 available under this section may be used for liti-
11 gation pursuant to section 1449.”.

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