

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8254

To establish a low-income water assistance program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 13, 2026

Ms. TLAIB (for herself, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. DELUZIO, Mr. GOMEZ, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. JACOBS, Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania, Mr. MULLIN, Ms. NORTON, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Mr. THANEDAR, and Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, Oversight and Government Reform, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To establish a low-income water assistance program, 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 “Water Access and Af-
5 fordability Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Safe, accessible, and affordable drinking
2 water is essential to the protection of public health.

3 (2) After 50 years, the Safe Drinking Water
4 Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.) has demonstrably im-
5 proved drinking water quality across the nation.
6 However, millions of Americans are unable to afford
7 their water bills and many water utilities have been
8 unable to fund and maintain infrastructure critical
9 to providing high quality, reliable, and affordable
10 drinking water. Therefore, the Federal Government
11 needs to increase water assistance to households and
12 communities.

13 (3) The Federal Government provides low-in-
14 come household assistance for basic necessities, in-
15 cluding food, housing, and energy. Water is also a
16 basic necessity and requires assistance from the
17 Federal Government.

18 (4) Every low-income household should be able
19 to access water assistance.

20 (5) Other programs that provide financial and
21 technical assistance for safe drinking water should
22 incorporate water affordability as a goal.

23 (6) More effective protection of public health re-
24 quires—

1 (A) a Federal commitment to ensuring the
2 collection and transparency of data on water
3 safety, access, and affordability at a national
4 level;

5 (B) a Federal commitment to water access
6 for all Native American Tribes; and

7 (C) a Federal commitment to having water
8 utilities capable of serving safe and affordable
9 drinking water to all households, including sup-
10 port for and oversight of State drinking water
11 programs in the areas of financial and technical
12 assistance, equitable utility consolidations,
13 workforce development and training, community
14 engagement, and enforcement.

15 (7) Consumers served by public water systems
16 should be provided with easy-to-understand informa-
17 tion on the cost of their water, opportunities to re-
18 duce their bill, and bill payment assistance pro-
19 grams.

20 **SEC. 3. LOW-INCOME WATER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**

21 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

22 (1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-
23 trator” means the Administrator of the Environ-
24 mental Protection Agency.

1 (2) AREA MEDIAN INCOME.—The term “area
2 median income” means the unadjusted median in-
3 come for an area determined by the Secretary of
4 Housing and Urban Development under section
5 16(a) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42
6 U.S.C. 1437n(a)).

7 (3) COMMUNITY WATER SYSTEM.—The term
8 “community water system” has the meaning given
9 that term in section 1401 of the Safe Drinking
10 Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300f).

11 (4) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
12 ty” means an eligible water system, a State, or an
13 Indian Tribe.

14 (5) ELIGIBLE WATER SYSTEM.—The term “eli-
15 gible water system” means—

16 (A) a community water system that serves
17 a population of 100,000 or more; or

18 (B) a treatment works that serves a popu-
19 lation of 100,000 or more.

20 (6) HOUSEHOLD.—The term “household”
21 means any individual or group of individuals who
22 are living together as 1 economic unit.

23 (7) LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLD.—The term
24 “low-income household” means a household—

1 (A) in which 1 or more individuals are re-
2 ceiving—

3 (i) assistance under a State program
4 funded under part A of title IV of the So-
5 cial Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.);

6 (ii) supplemental security income pay-
7 ments under title XVI of the Social Secu-
8 rity Act (42 U.S.C. 1381 et seq.);

9 (iii) supplemental nutrition assistance
10 program benefits under the Food and Nu-
11 trition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et
12 seq.);

13 (iv) payments under—

14 (I) section 1315, 1521, 1541, or
15 1542 of title 38, United States Code;
16 or

17 (II) section 306 of the Veterans'
18 and Survivors' Pension Improvement
19 Act of 1978 (38 U.S.C. 1521 note;
20 Public Law 95–588);

21 (v) assistance under the Low-Income
22 Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981 (42
23 U.S.C. 8621 et seq.); or

24 (vi) assistance under the special sup-
25 plemental nutrition program for women,

1 infants, and children under section 17 of
2 the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42
3 U.S.C. 1786); or

4 (B) that has an income that, as deter-
5 mined by the entity that is implementing a
6 water service access program in the area in
7 which the household is located, does not exceed
8 the greater of—

9 (i) an amount equal to 200 percent of
10 the poverty level; and

11 (ii) an amount equal to 80 percent of
12 the area median income.

13 (8) POVERTY LEVEL.—The term “poverty
14 level” means, with respect to a household in a State,
15 the income described in the poverty guidelines issued
16 by the Secretary of Health and Human Services
17 pursuant to section 673 of the Community Services
18 Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902), as applicable to
19 the household.

20 (9) SMALL AND MID-SIZE WATER SYSTEMS.—
21 The term “small and mid-size water systems”
22 means—

23 (A) community water systems that serve a
24 population of less than 100,000; and

1 (B) treatment works that serve a popu-
2 lation of less than 100,000.

3 (10) STATE.—The term “State” means a State,
4 the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of
5 Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American
6 Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern
7 Mariana Islands.

8 (11) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDER.—The
9 term “technical assistance provider” means a com-
10 munity-based organization, environmental justice or-
11 ganization, university, rural assistance corporation,
12 energy utility, business, or other organization identi-
13 fied by the Administrator as having relevant exper-
14 tise in community outreach, assistance program en-
15 rollment processes and administration, utility data
16 and billing systems, developing applications for fund-
17 ing, or other areas determined appropriate by the
18 Administrator.

19 (12) TREATMENT WORKS.—The term “treat-
20 ment works” has the meaning given that term in
21 section 212 of the Federal Water Pollution Control
22 Act (33 U.S.C. 1292).

23 (13) WATER CRISIS.—The term “water crisis”
24 means a weather-related or supply shortage emer-
25 gency or other household water-related emergency,

1 including disconnection of water service for non-
2 payment, imminent disconnection of water service
3 for nonpayment, or other emergency threatening a
4 household's access to safe water services.

5 (14) WATER SERVICE.—The term “water serv-
6 ice” means—

7 (A) drinking water service provided by a
8 community water system; or

9 (B) sanitary sewer service provided by a
10 treatment works.

11 (15) WATER SERVICE ACCESS PROGRAM.—The
12 term “water service access program” means a pro-
13 gram to provide low-income households the ability to
14 maintain access to water services through the receipt
15 of Federal financial assistance.

16 (b) FEDERAL LOW-INCOME WATER ASSISTANCE
17 PROGRAM.—

18 (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 12
19 months after the date of enactment of this section,
20 the Administrator shall establish a Federal low-in-
21 come water assistance program to assist low-income
22 households in maintaining access to affordable water
23 services, which program shall include—

1 (A) development and implementation of
2 water service access programs that include
3 funding to assist low-income households;

4 (B) technical assistance for the implemen-
5 tation of such water service access programs;
6 and

7 (C) data collection and reporting.

8 (2) COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEES.—

9 (A) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Administrator
10 shall establish a community advisory committee
11 for each region of the Environmental Protection
12 Agency to provide advice and recommendations
13 to each entity implementing a water service ac-
14 cess program under subsection (c) within the
15 region.

16 (B) MEMBERSHIP.—The Administrator
17 shall include in each community advisory com-
18 mittee established under this paragraph mem-
19 bers from low-income communities, non-govern-
20 mental organizations, and other stakeholders
21 determined relevant by the Administrator.

22 (c) WATER SERVICE ACCESS PROGRAMS.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall—

24 (A) develop a water service access pro-
25 gram; and

1 (B) implement such water service access
2 program in each State.

3 (2) DELEGATION OF IMPLEMENTATION.—

4 (A) AUTHORITY TO DELEGATE.—

5 (i) DELEGATION OF AREAS.—Except
6 as provided in clause (ii), upon application
7 by an eligible entity under subparagraph
8 (B), the Administrator may delegate to the
9 eligible entity the implementation of a
10 water service access program for—

11 (I) with respect to an eligible en-
12 tity that is an eligible water system,
13 the service area of such eligible water
14 system;

15 (II) with respect to an eligible
16 entity that is an Indian Tribe, the ge-
17 ographic area under the jurisdiction of
18 the Indian Tribe; and

19 (III) with respect to an eligible
20 entity that is a State, the area within
21 the geographic boundaries of the
22 State.

23 (ii) NON-OVERLAPPING PROGRAMS.—
24 If the Administrator delegates the imple-
25 mentation of a water service access pro-

1 gram for an area to an eligible entity that
2 is an eligible water system or an Indian
3 Tribe, the Administrator shall withhold or
4 withdraw, as applicable, delegation for
5 such area from the State in which such
6 area is located.

7 (B) APPLICATION.—To implement a water
8 service access program under this subsection,
9 an eligible entity shall submit to the Adminis-
10 trator an application that demonstrates that—

11 (i) the water service access program
12 proposed to be implemented by the eligible
13 entity—

14 (I) meets the requirements estab-
15 lished under paragraph (3); and

16 (II) was developed in accordance
17 with paragraph (4); and

18 (ii) the eligible entity has the capacity
19 to—

20 (I) make assistance under the
21 water service access program available
22 to all low-income households in its ju-
23 risdiction or service area, without re-
24 gard to where that household resides
25 within the jurisdiction or service area;

1 (II) fulfill the data collection and
2 management requirements set forth in
3 subsection (e); and

4 (III) develop and implement, in
5 coordination with technical assistance
6 providers, an effective community out-
7 reach plan to inform low-income
8 households of the water service access
9 program and assist with enrollment.

10 (C) GRANTS.—

11 (i) AWARD.—If the Administrator del-
12 egates implementation of a water service
13 access program to an eligible entity under
14 this paragraph, the Administrator shall
15 award a grant to the eligible entity to im-
16 plement such program.

17 (ii) LIMITATIONS.—A grant awarded
18 under this paragraph—

19 (I) shall not be used to replace
20 funds for any existing similar pro-
21 gram of a State, community water
22 system, or treatment works to assist
23 low-income households in maintaining
24 access to affordable water services in
25 the area for which the water service

1 access program will be implemented;
2 but

3 (II) may be used to supplement
4 or enhance such a program.

5 (D) REVOCATION.—

6 (i) NOTIFICATION AND OPPORTUNITY
7 TO REMEDY.—If the Administrator deter-
8 mines, based on information required to be
9 submitted to the Administrator under this
10 section by an eligible entity implementing a
11 water service access program under this
12 subsection, that the water service access
13 program is not being implemented in com-
14 pliance with all requirements of this sec-
15 tion, the Administrator shall promptly no-
16 tify the eligible entity of such noncompli-
17 ance, the necessary remedial actions, and a
18 deadline for promptly implementing such
19 remedial actions.

20 (ii) FAILURE TO REMEDY.—The Ad-
21 ministrator shall revoke delegation under
22 this subsection to an eligible entity if the
23 eligible entity fails to take the necessary
24 remedial actions by the deadline set by the
25 Administrator under clause (i).

1 (iii) EFFECT.—If the Administrator
2 revokes delegation under this subsection to
3 an eligible entity, implementation of a
4 water service access program under this
5 subsection for the previously delegated
6 area shall revert to the Administrator, who
7 may delegate such implementation to the
8 State in which such area is located if such
9 State is implementing a water service ac-
10 cess program pursuant to subparagraph
11 (A).

12 (3) MINIMUM WATER SERVICE ACCESS PRO-
13 GRAM REQUIREMENTS.—

14 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 6
15 months after the date of enactment of this sec-
16 tion, the Administrator shall establish minimum
17 requirements for water service access programs
18 developed and implemented under this sub-
19 section.

20 (B) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out sub-
21 paragraph (A), the Administrator shall—

22 (i) consult with relevant stakeholders,
23 including frontline community groups,
24 Tribal communities, and technical assist-
25 ance providers; and

1 (ii) provide an opportunity for public
2 comment on the proposed requirements.

3 (C) INCLUSIONS.—The minimum require-
4 ments established under subparagraph (A) for a
5 water service access program shall include—

6 (i) provisions to promote universal ac-
7 cess for low-income households to assist-
8 ance under the water service access pro-
9 gram (including low-income households in
10 which none of the individual members is a
11 named account holder of the applicable
12 community water system or treatment
13 works), including provisions for—

14 (I) sharing of data from other
15 administrators of Federal, State, or
16 local income-qualified assistance pro-
17 grams to facilitate automatic enroll-
18 ment in the water service access pro-
19 gram of all households participating
20 in those other programs that are eligi-
21 ble to receive assistance under the
22 water service access program, without
23 the need for those households to apply
24 separately for the water service access
25 program;

1 (II) allowance for community
2 water systems and treatment works to
3 receive program funds for low-income
4 household debt reduction and directly
5 apply such funds to customer ac-
6 counts;

7 (III) allowance for self-attesta-
8 tion by households served by commu-
9 nity water systems or treatment works
10 of eligibility, including self-attestation
11 of income qualification or enrollment
12 in an existing Federal, State, or local
13 assistance program on the basis of in-
14 come;

15 (IV) with respect to any portion
16 of the process for enrollment in the
17 water service access program for
18 which a signature of a member of a
19 low-income household is required, al-
20 lowance for the use of an electronic
21 signature; and

22 (V) prohibitions on—

23 (aa) asset tests and in-per-
24 son enrollment appointments as
25 requirements to receive assist-

1 ance under the water service ac-
2 cess program; and

3 (bb) citizenship or legal resi-
4 dency requirements for members
5 of a low-income household in
6 order for the household to receive
7 assistance under the water serv-
8 ice access program;

9 (ii) assistance to low-income house-
10 holds served by community water systems
11 or treatment works (including low-income
12 households in which none of the individual
13 members is a named account holder of the
14 applicable community water system or
15 treatment works), with greater assistance
16 amounts provided to households with high-
17 er water service costs and lower incomes,
18 taking into account household size, in the
19 form of—

20 (I) direct financial assistance, in-
21 cluding bill discounting, percentage-of-
22 income payment plan, a lifeline rate,
23 or any other form of direct assistance
24 identified by the Administrator;

25 (II) debt relief;

1 (III) water crisis assistance; and

2 (IV) water efficiency assistance,
3 including providing or subsidizing the
4 cost of installation of water-efficient
5 appliances and fixtures or leak detec-
6 tion and plumbing repair work;

7 (iii) provisions prohibiting the inclu-
8 sion of eligibility restrictions or enrollment
9 requirements not specifically required by
10 this section;

11 (iv) provisions, including penalties on
12 community water systems and treatment
13 works for violations, as established by the
14 Administrator, to ensure that no household
15 receiving assistance under the program—

16 (I) is disconnected from water
17 service, loses access to or ownership of
18 its current housing, or is otherwise
19 denied access to an amount and flow
20 of water sufficient to meet its essen-
21 tial needs because of the household's
22 inability to pay bills owed to a com-
23 munity water system or treatment
24 works, or, where the water service ac-
25 count-holder for the household's dwell-

1 ing is not a member of the household,
2 due to the failure of the account-hold-
3 er to pay bills owed to the community
4 water system or treatment works; or

5 (II) is required to pay any fees,
6 charges, or deposits associated with
7 late payments, unpaid bills, service
8 initiation, or service reconnection;

9 (v) procedures that minimize burdens
10 on low-income households of filing a com-
11 plete application for assistance under the
12 program, including allowing for alternative
13 forms of identification;

14 (vi) provisions that require equal ac-
15 cess to assistance to households that pay
16 bills for water services directly and house-
17 holds the water services of which are in-
18 cluded in rent or other payments, including
19 by providing for households that cannot re-
20 ceive assistance through a bill for water
21 services other types of assistance, such as
22 cash assistance, credits on a different util-
23 ity bill, and receipt of water quality and ef-
24 ficiency upgrades and devices; and

1 (vii) coordination of development and
2 implementation of the water service access
3 program with other existing water assist-
4 ance programs, energy assistance pro-
5 grams, and other relevant Federal, State,
6 and local programs that provide financial
7 or other assistance to low-income house-
8 holds.

9 (4) PUBLIC PROCESS.—Each entity developing
10 or implementing a water service access program
11 under this subsection shall, each fiscal year—

12 (A) consult with the applicable community
13 advisory committee established under subsection
14 (b)(2), Tribal communities, and other commu-
15 nity representatives, as applicable; and

16 (B) provide an opportunity for a public
17 hearing and public comment on the water serv-
18 ice access program.

19 (d) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall pro-
21 vide funding to technical assistance providers to—

22 (A) facilitate enrollment by low-income
23 households in water service access programs im-
24 plemented under this section; and

1 (B) assist small and mid-size water sys-
2 tems in participating in water service access
3 programs implemented under this section.

4 (2) MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS.—The Adminis-
5 trator shall establish minimum requirements for
6 technical assistance provided under paragraph (1),
7 which shall include requirements for—

8 (A) outreach to low-income households in
9 communities with high incidence of disconnec-
10 tions of water service or that may face difficulty
11 enrolling in or accessing assistance through a
12 water service access program, including house-
13 holds in geographically remote locations, house-
14 holds lacking access to telecommunications net-
15 works (including home broadband internet serv-
16 ice), households with limited English pro-
17 ficiency, and households in which an individual
18 with a disability (as defined in section 3 of the
19 Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42
20 U.S.C. 12102)) resides; and

21 (B) developing the capacity of small and
22 mid-size water systems to—

23 (i) carry out any applicable activities
24 necessary for assistance to be provided

1 pursuant to a water service access program
2 implemented under this section; and

3 (ii) provide complete and accurate in-
4 formation to the entity implementing an
5 applicable water service access program as
6 necessary for such entity to comply with
7 the reporting requirements of this section.

8 (3) SET-ASIDES.—

9 (A) DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS.—Of
10 the funds made available to carry out this sub-
11 section, the Administrator shall ensure that a
12 minimum of 20 percent is used for—

13 (i) the improvement of data manage-
14 ment systems, including billing systems,
15 websites, and electronic customer commu-
16 nications, for small and mid-size water sys-
17 tems; and

18 (ii) implementation of easily accessible
19 enrollment and data transmission tech-
20 nologies, such as smartphone applications.

21 (B) UNDER-RESOURCED COMMUNITIES.—

22 Of the funds made available to carry out this
23 subsection, the Administrator shall ensure that
24 a minimum of 20 percent is provided to tech-
25 nical service providers that are environmental

1 justice organizations and community-based or-
2 ganizations to build capacity and provide assist-
3 ance for under-resourced communities to fully
4 access a water service access program.

5 (4) COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.—The Adminis-
6 trator shall engage with environmental justice orga-
7 nizations and community-based organizations—

8 (A) in establishing the minimum require-
9 ments under paragraph (2); and

10 (B) to encourage their participation in the
11 provision of technical assistance under this sub-
12 section, including by making them aware of the
13 funds set aside under paragraph (3)(B).

14 (e) DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING.—

15 (1) REPORTING TO THE ADMINISTRATOR.—

16 (A) IN GENERAL.—Each eligible entity im-
17 plementing a water service access program
18 under this section shall annually submit to the
19 Administrator, in a manner determined by the
20 Administrator, information regarding the appli-
21 cable water service access program, including—

22 (i) the demonstrable impacts of the
23 program on bill debt and timely bill pay-
24 ments for low-income households that re-
25 ceive assistance under the program, based

1 on data from before and after the imple-
2 mentation of the program, including, for
3 each county and ZIP code within the geo-
4 graphic area served by the program—

5 (I) the number of households
6 that experienced a disconnection of
7 water service for nonpayment and the
8 number of households for which dis-
9 connection was avoided directly due to
10 the provision of assistance under the
11 program;

12 (II) the number of households
13 and amount of debt subject to sale or
14 enforcement of property liens and the
15 number of households for which sale
16 or enforcement of property liens was
17 avoided directly due to the provision
18 of assistance under the program;

19 (III) the number of households
20 enrolled in the program;

21 (IV) the benefit levels, amount of
22 debt reduction, and total amount of
23 assistance provided to enrolled house-
24 holds; and

1 (V) the number of enrolled
2 households reconnected to water serv-
3 ice and a summary of the fees and
4 charges waived for enrolled house-
5 holds, including disconnection and re-
6 connection charges, late payment fees,
7 and interest charges;

8 (ii) revenue collection information
9 from each community water system and
10 treatment works within the geographic
11 area served by the program, including—

12 (I) rate design for residential
13 customers;

14 (II) billing frequency;

15 (III) fees, taxes, and other
16 charges that are included on every
17 residential bill or that are billed to a
18 residential customer under specific
19 circumstances but are not included on
20 every residential bill; and

21 (IV) projected rate increases dur-
22 ing the 5-year period following sub-
23 mission of the information under this
24 subsection;

1 (iii) information regarding any other
2 water service customer assistance pro-
3 grams within the geographic area served
4 by the program, including information
5 about such other programs relating to rate
6 structures, rebates, discounts, billing meth-
7 ods that average rates over the course of
8 a year (known as “budget billing”), and
9 procedures that ensure that households re-
10 ceive notice and an opportunity to dispute
11 charges before service is disconnected or
12 interrupted due to non-payment; and

13 (iv) other relevant information re-
14 quired by the Administrator.

15 (B) ADDITIONAL TIME FOR COMPLETION
16 OF CERTAIN REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—The
17 Administrator may postpone a requirement to
18 include in an annual submission data required
19 under subparagraph (A), taking into consider-
20 ation the availability of technical assistance
21 pursuant to subsection (d) related to data re-
22 porting.

23 (C) PUBLICATION.—The Administrator
24 shall annually—

1 (i) make information on water service
2 access programs implemented under this
3 section available in an easily accessible for-
4 mat on the website of the Environmental
5 Protection Agency, including—

6 (I) a list of all such water service
7 access programs and contact informa-
8 tion for the entities implementing
9 such programs; and

10 (II) the information submitted
11 under subparagraph (A); and

12 (ii) publish a report that compiles and
13 summarizes the information submitted
14 under this paragraph.

15 (2) REPORTING TO STATES.—An eligible water
16 system that is implementing a water service access
17 program pursuant to this section shall report to each
18 agency or office of the State in which the water serv-
19 ice access program is implemented that funds or
20 regulates water systems—

21 (A) the amount of all grants it receives
22 under this section; and

23 (B) all information it submits to the Ad-
24 ministrator under paragraph (1) and subsection
25 (c)(2)(B).

1 (f) ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS.—

2 (1) ASSISTANCE EXEMPT FROM INCLUSION AS
3 INCOME.—

4 (A) INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE.—In the case
5 of any individual who is a member of a low-in-
6 come household receiving assistance under a
7 water service access program implemented
8 under this section—

9 (i) for purposes of the Internal Rev-
10 enue Code of 1986, gross income shall not
11 include any such assistance provided to
12 such individual; and

13 (ii) notwithstanding any other provi-
14 sion of law, any such assistance provided
15 to such individual shall not be considered
16 income or resources of such household (or
17 any member thereof) for any purpose
18 under any other Federal or State law, in-
19 cluding any law relating to taxation or gov-
20 ernmental assistance programs.

21 (B) ASSISTANCE TO ELIGIBLE WATER SYS-
22 TEMS.—A grant received under this section by
23 an eligible water system that is subject to Fed-
24 eral or State income tax shall not be considered
25 income for purposes of any Federal or State in-

1 come tax law if the Administrator determines
2 that the eligible water system complied with the
3 requirements established under subsection
4 (c)(3)(C)(iv) during the year in which the grant
5 was received.

6 (2) ASSISTANCE NOT A FEDERAL PUBLIC BEN-
7 EFIT.—Notwithstanding section 401(c) of the Per-
8 sonal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Rec-
9 onciliation Act of 1996 (8 U.S.C. 1611(c)), assist-
10 ance provided to a low-income household under a
11 water service access program implemented under
12 this section shall not be considered a Federal public
13 benefit for purposes of title IV of such Act (8 U.S.C.
14 1601 et seq.).

15 (3) FINANCIAL TERMS FOR PRIVATE UTILI-
16 TIES.—A community water system or treatment
17 works that is not wholly owned by a governmental
18 entity may not use any funds received under or pur-
19 suant to this section to provide any financial benefits
20 to the owners of the community water system or
21 treatment works, including increased rates of return
22 on capital investments, dividends, and interest.

23 (g) REPORT.—Not later than 5 years after the date
24 on which grant funds are first disbursed to an eligible enti-
25 ty under this section, and every 5 years thereafter, the

1 Administrator shall submit to Congress a report on the
2 results of the Federal low-income water assistance pro-
3 gram established under this section, which report shall in-
4 clude—

5 (1) an assessment of the remaining need and
6 obstacles to achieving universal water service access
7 and affordability; and

8 (2) relevant findings and information from
9 other programs and assessments, including—

10 (A) State revolving fund programs under
11 the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Federal
12 Water Pollution Control Act;

13 (B) State drinking water program plans,
14 as applicable;

15 (C) the national drinking water infrastruc-
16 ture needs survey and assessment conducted
17 under section 1452(h) of the Safe Drinking
18 Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j–12(h)); and

19 (D) the National Climate Assessment car-
20 ried out pursuant to the Global Change Re-
21 search Act of 1990 (15 U.S.C. 2921 et seq.).

22 (h) USE OF NATIONAL SURVEYS.—

23 (1) QUESTIONS.—The Director of the United
24 States Census Bureau shall, in coordination with the
25 Administrator, add one or more questions into the

1 American Community Survey to ascertain whether
2 households have faced difficulty paying for water
3 services.

4 (2) USE.—The Administrator shall use infor-
5 mation from the American Community Survey to in-
6 form the reports submitted under subsection (g).

7 (i) FUNDING.—

8 (1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—
9 There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out
10 this section \$20,000,000,000 for each of fiscal years
11 2027 through 2037.

12 (2) ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.—

13 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator
14 shall establish a formula to annually allocate
15 funds made available to carry out this section
16 among entities implementing water service ac-
17 cess programs, based on—

18 (i) number of low-income persons and
19 households served by each such program;

20 (ii) technical assistance needs of eligi-
21 ble entities implementing such programs,
22 including needs for enrollment support,
23 community outreach, and data collection
24 and reporting;

1 (iii) administrative costs of imple-
2 menting such programs;

3 (iv) water service costs in the area
4 served by each such program;

5 (v) exceptional community needs
6 owing to water quality and water scarcity;
7 and

8 (vi) any other criteria determined rel-
9 evant by the Administrator.

10 (B) REQUIREMENTS.—In establishing the
11 allocation formula under subparagraph (A), the
12 Administrator shall—

13 (i) ensure that equal amounts of
14 funds are made available with respect to
15 drinking water services and sanitary sewer
16 services; and

17 (ii) determine appropriate allotments
18 for the provision of technical assistance
19 through each water service access program.

20 (C) RESERVATION OF FUNDS.—The Ad-
21 ministrator may reserve up to 10 percent of
22 funds made available to carry out this section
23 for each fiscal year to provide supplementary
24 funds for water service access programs that
25 serve—

1 (i) territories, or areas under the ju-
 2 risdiction of an Indian Tribe, that have
 3 historically lacked equitable access to Fed-
 4 eral and State financial assistance for
 5 drinking water and wastewater infrastruc-
 6 ture; and

7 (ii) communities experiencing lack of
 8 access to safe public drinking water serv-
 9 ices to meet essential household needs.

10 **SEC. 4. STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS.**

11 (a) SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT.—

12 (1) INTENDED USE PLANS.—Section 1452(b) of
 13 the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j–
 14 12(b)) is amended—

15 (A) in paragraph (1), by inserting “in ac-
 16 cordance with paragraph (4)” after “public re-
 17 view and comment”; and

18 (B) by adding at the end the following:

19 “(4) PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT.—In pre-
 20 paring an intended use plan under paragraph (1), a
 21 State shall—

22 “(A) before adopting a final plan—

23 “(i) make a draft of the plan, and in-
 24 structions for how to provide comments on

1 the draft, available on a publicly accessible
2 website;

3 “(ii) provide a minimum of 30 days
4 for public comment on the draft;

5 “(iii) provide written responses to
6 timely submitted written public comments
7 on the draft; and

8 “(iv) after providing such written re-
9 sponses, hold at least one public hearing
10 on the draft;

11 “(B) make the final plan available on a
12 publicly accessible website; and

13 “(C) allow for submission of applications
14 for financial and technical assistance at any
15 time.

16 “(5) TRANSPARENCY AND EVALUATION.—

17 “(A) REGULATIONS.—

18 “(i) PROMULGATION.—Not later than
19 one year after the date of enactment of
20 this paragraph, the Administrator shall
21 promulgate regulations to increase trans-
22 parency and promote evaluation of—

23 “(I) the distribution by States of
24 the amounts available to the State
25 loan fund among the intended uses

1 identified in a plan under this sub-
2 section; and

3 “(II) the criteria and methods es-
4 tablished by States under paragraph
5 (2)(B) for the distribution of funds.

6 “(ii) INCLUSIONS.—The Adminis-
7 trator shall include in the regulations pro-
8 mulgated under clause (i)—

9 “(I) a requirement that States
10 provide to the Administrator data
11 about—

12 “(aa) funded and unfunded
13 projects that are eligible for as-
14 sistance from the State loan
15 fund; and

16 “(bb) the geographic and so-
17 cioeconomic distribution of such
18 funded projects, including the
19 amount and percentage of assist-
20 ance allocated to projects that
21 serve disadvantaged communities;

22 “(II) creation of a central online
23 repository for intended use plans and
24 data provided pursuant to subclause
25 (I); and

1 “(III) creation of an advisory
2 group within each State to provide ad-
3 vice and recommendations on intended
4 use plans, State loan fund policies,
5 and implementation of such plans and
6 policies.

7 “(B) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Adminis-
8 trator shall make available on a publicly acces-
9 sible website an annual report, prepared based
10 on the data provided pursuant to subparagraph
11 (A)(ii)(I) and feedback from State advisory
12 groups created under subparagraph (A)(ii)(III),
13 which shall include—

14 “(i) information on and analysis of
15 the use by each State of the amounts avail-
16 able to the State loan fund of the State,
17 including, for each State, the amount of
18 assistance provided under this section, and
19 the number of public water systems receiv-
20 ing such assistance;

21 “(ii) data and metrics on disadvan-
22 taged communities served and technical as-
23 sistance and outreach efforts; and

24 “(iii) ongoing challenges at the na-
25 tional and State level.”.

1 (2) ASSISTANCE FOR DISADVANTAGED COMMU-
 2 NITIES.—Section 1452(d) of the Safe Drinking
 3 Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j–12(d)) is amended—

4 (A) in paragraph (3), by adding at the end
 5 the following: “Each State shall, during cal-
 6 endar year 2027 and every three years there-
 7 after, conduct a review of, and if appropriate
 8 revise, the affordability criteria established by
 9 the State under this subsection.”; and

10 (B) by adding at the end the following:

11 “(4) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—Not later
 12 than one year after the date of enactment of this
 13 paragraph, the Administrator shall promulgate regu-
 14 lations to expedite the provision of assistance to, and
 15 provide flexible repayment options for, disadvan-
 16 taged communities receiving assistance under this
 17 section.”.

18 (3) ADMINISTRATION OF STATE LOAN
 19 FUNDS.—Section 1452(g)(2)(A)(i) of the Safe
 20 Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j–12(g)(2)(A)(i))
 21 is amended—

22 (A) in the matter preceding subclause (I),
 23 by striking “may” and inserting “shall”; and

24 (B) in subclause (I), by striking “; and”
 25 and inserting “, except that a State may not

1 use more than 30 percent of such amount to
2 cover costs under this subclause; and”.

3 (b) FEDERAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ACT.—

4 (1) WATER POLLUTION CONTROL REVOLVING
5 LOAN FUNDS.—

6 (A) ADDITIONAL SUBSIDIZATION.—Section
7 603(i)(2) of the Federal Water Pollution Con-
8 trol Act (33 U.S.C. 1383(i)(2)) is amended by
9 adding at the end the following:

10 “(D) REVIEW AND REVISION.—Each State
11 shall, during calendar year 2027 and every
12 three years thereafter, conduct a review of, and
13 if appropriate revise, the affordability criteria
14 established by the State under this paragraph.

15 “(E) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—Not
16 later than one year after the date of enactment
17 of this subparagraph, the Administrator shall
18 promulgate regulations to expedite the provision
19 by a State of assistance to, and flexible repay-
20 ment options for, municipalities that meet the
21 affordability criteria established by the State
22 under this paragraph.”.

23 (B) ADDITIONAL USE OF FUNDS.—Section
24 603(k) of the Federal Water Pollution Control

1 Act (33 U.S.C. 1383(k)) is amended by striking
2 “may” and inserting “shall”.

3 (2) AUDITS, REPORTS, AND FISCAL CONTROLS;
4 INTENDED USE PLAN.—Section 606 of the Federal
5 Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1386) is
6 amended—

7 (A) in subsection (c), in the matter pre-
8 ceding paragraph (1), by inserting “in accord-
9 ance with subsection (g)” after “public com-
10 ment and review”; and

11 (B) by adding at the end the following:

12 “(g) PUBLIC COMMENT AND REVIEW.—In preparing
13 an intended use plan under subsection (c), a State shall—

14 “(1) before adopting a final plan—

15 “(A) make a draft of the plan, and instruc-
16 tions for how to provide comments on the draft,
17 available on a publicly accessible website;

18 “(B) provide a minimum of 30 days for
19 public comment on the draft;

20 “(C) provide written responses to timely
21 submitted written public comments on the
22 draft; and

23 “(D) after providing such written re-
24 sponses, hold at least one public hearing on the
25 draft;

1 “(2) make the final plan available on a publicly
2 accessible website; and

3 “(3) allow for submission of applications for fi-
4 nancial and technical assistance at any time.

5 “(h) TRANSPARENCY AND EVALUATION.—

6 “(1) REGULATIONS.—

7 “(A) PROMULGATION.—Not later than one
8 year after the date of enactment of this sub-
9 section, the Administrator shall promulgate reg-
10 ulations to increase transparency and promote
11 evaluation of—

12 “(i) the distribution by States of the
13 amounts available to the State water pollu-
14 tion control revolving fund among the in-
15 tended uses identified in a plan under sub-
16 section (c); and

17 “(ii) the criteria and methods estab-
18 lished by States under subsection (c)(5) for
19 the distribution of funds.

20 “(B) INCLUSIONS.—The Administrator
21 shall include in the regulations promulgated
22 under subparagraph (A)—

23 “(i) a requirement that States provide
24 to the Administrator, in each annual re-

1 port provided under subsection (d), data
2 about—

3 “(I) funded and unfunded
4 projects that are eligible for assistance
5 from the State water pollution control
6 revolving fund; and

7 “(II) the geographic and socio-
8 economic distribution of such funded
9 projects, including the amount and
10 percentage of assistance allocated to
11 projects that serve municipalities that
12 meet the affordability criteria estab-
13 lished by the State under section
14 603(i)(2);

15 “(ii) creation of a central online re-
16 pository for intended use plans and data
17 provided pursuant to clause (i); and

18 “(iii) creation of an advisory group
19 within each State to provide advice and
20 recommendations on intended use plans,
21 State water pollution control revolving
22 fund policies, and implementation of such
23 plans and policies.

24 “(2) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Administrator
25 shall make available on a publicly accessible website

1 an annual report, prepared based on the data pro-
2 vided pursuant to paragraph (1)(B)(i) and feedback
3 from State advisory groups created under paragraph
4 (1)(B)(iii), which shall include—

5 “(A) information on and analysis of the
6 use by each State of the amounts available to
7 the State water pollution control revolving fund
8 of the State, including, for each State, the
9 amount of assistance provided under this title,
10 and the number of treatment works with re-
11 spect to which such assistance was provided;

12 “(B) data and metrics on disadvantaged
13 communities served and technical assistance
14 and outreach efforts; and

15 “(C) ongoing challenges at the national
16 and State level.”.

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