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SENATE

{ REPORT
114-47

GRASSROOTS RURAL AND SMALL COMMUNITY WATER SYSTEMS ASSISTANCE ACT

MAY 18, 2015.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. INHOFE, from the Committee on Environment and Public
Works, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany S. 611]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Environment and Public Works, to which was referred a bill (S. 611) to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to reauthorize technical assistance to small public water systems, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

GENERAL STATEMENT AND BACKGROUND

S. 611 reauthorizes section 1442(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), which was enacted as part of 1996 amendments to the SDWA. The program provides funding to third-party organizations that carry out on-site training and technical assistance for small public water systems to help such systems achieve and maintain compliance with the SDWA.

The bill provides additional criteria for selecting organizations to receive funding to ensure that resources are targeted to the most effective organizations that are most beneficial for small and rural communities.

The bill reauthorizes the program for \$15 million per year through fiscal year 2020.

OBJECTIVES OF THE LEGISLATION

The Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act reauthorizes a Safe Drinking Water Act program to provide technical assistance to small public water systems.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1. Short title

This section provides that the Act may be cited as the “Grass-roots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act”.

Section 2. Findings

This section establishes findings related to the Safe Drinking Water Act’s technical assistance program.

Section 3. Sense of Congress

This section states that it is the sense of Congress that the Environmental Protection Agency should prioritize technical assistance that is most beneficial to communities being served and that local support is key to successful assistance.

Section 4. Funding Priorities

This section amends section 1442(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j–1(e)).

Paragraph (2) extends the authorization of appropriations through fiscal year 2020.

Paragraph (3) authorizes the Administrator to provide grants or cooperative agreements to nonprofit organizations to provide assistance to small public water systems. Preference is given to organizations that are the most qualified and experienced in providing training and technical assistance to small public water systems and that small community water systems in the State find to be the most beneficial and effective. It also prohibits the use of funds for litigation pursuant to section 1449.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

S. 611 was introduced by Sen. Wicker along with 15 cosponsors on February 27, 2015. The Committee on Environment and Public Works met to consider S. 611 on April 29, 2015. The bill was approved by voice vote.

HEARINGS

No committee hearings were held on S. 611.

ROLLCALL VOTES

The Committee on Environment and Public Works met to consider S. 611 on April 29, 2015. The bill was ordered favorably reported by voice vote. No roll call votes were taken.

REGULATORY IMPACT STATEMENT

In compliance with section 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the committee finds that S. 611 does not create any additional regulatory burdens, nor will it cause any adverse impact on the personal privacy of individuals.

MANDATES ASSESSMENT

In compliance with the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (Public Law 104–4), the committee notes that the Congressional

Budget Office found that, “S. 611 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA.”

COST OF LEGISLATION

Section 403 of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act requires that a statement of the cost of the reported bill, prepared by the Congressional Budget Office, be included in the report. That statement follows:

U.S. CONGRESS,
 CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
 Washington, DC, May 8, 2015.

Hon. JIM INHOFE,
 Chairman, Committee on Environment and Public Works,
 U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for S. 611, the Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Susanne S. Mehlman.

Sincerely,

KEITH HALL.

Enclosure.

S. 611—Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act

Summary: S. 611 would authorize the appropriation of \$15 million annually over the 2016–2020 period for the Environmental Protection Agency’s program that provides technical assistance to small public water systems. The authorization for this program expired in 2003, but the program received an appropriation of \$13 million for fiscal year 2015. CBO estimates that implementing S. 611 would cost \$67 million over the next five years, assuming appropriation of the authorized amounts. Pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply to S. 611 because it would not affect direct spending or revenues.

S. 611 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA).

Estimated cost to the Federal Government: The estimated budgetary impact of S. 611 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and environment).

| | By fiscal year, in millions of dollars— | | | | | |
|--|---|------|------|------|------|-----------|
| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2016–2020 |
| CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION | | | | | | |
| Authorization Level | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 75 |
| Estimated Outlays | 8 | 14 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 67 |

Basis of estimate: For this estimate, CBO assumes that S. 611 will be enacted by the end of fiscal year 2015, that the specified amounts will be appropriated in each year starting in 2016, and that outlays will follow historical spending patterns for the technical assistance program. The legislation would authorize funding

for nonprofit organizations to help small public water systems achieve and maintain compliance with national regulations and to support training and engineering evaluations of those water systems.

Pay-as-You-Go considerations: None.

Intergovernmental and private-sector impact: S. 611 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA. Activities authorized in the bill would assist public water systems to comply with national standards for primary drinking water.

Estimate prepared by: Federal costs: Susanne S. Mehlman; Impact on state, local, and tribal governments: Jon Sperl; Impact on the private sector: Amy Petz.

Estimate approved by: Theresa Gullo, Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with section 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, changes in existing law made by the bill as reported are shown as follows: Existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in [black brackets], new matter is printed in italic, existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman:

SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT

* * * * *

SEC. 1400. This title may be cited as the ‘Safe Drinking Water Act’.

* * * * *

SEC. 1442. (a)(1) The Administrator may conduct research, studies, and demonstrations relating to the causes, diagnosis, treatment, control, and prevention of physical and mental diseases and other impairments of man resulting directly or indirectly from contaminants in water, or to the provision of a dependably safe supply of drinking water, including—

(A) * * *

* * * * *

(e) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE—

(1) The Administrator may provide technical assistance to small public water systems to enable such systems to achieve and maintain compliance with applicable national primary drinking water regulations.

(2) Such assistance may include circuit-rider and multi-State regional technical assistance programs, training, and preliminary engineering evaluations.

(3) The Administrator shall ensure that technical assistance pursuant to this subsection is available in each State.

(4) Each nonprofit organization receiving assistance under this subsection shall consult with the State in which the assistance is to be expended or otherwise made available before using assistance to undertake activities to carry out this subsection.

(5) There are authorized to be appropriated to the Administrator to be used for such technical assistance \$15,000,000 for

each of the fiscal years **[1997 through 2003]** *2015 through 2020*.

(6) No portion of any State loan fund established under section 1452 (relating to State loan funds) and no portion of any funds made available under this subsection may be used for lobbying expenses.

(7) Of the total amount appropriated under this subsection, 3 percent shall be used for technical assistance to public water systems owned or operated by Indian Tribes.

(8) *Nonprofit organizations.*—

(A) *IN GENERAL.*—*The Administrator may use amounts made available to carry out this section to provide grants or cooperative agreements to nonprofit organizations that provide to small public water systems onsite technical assistance, circuit-rider technical assistance programs, multistate, regional technical assistance programs, onsite and regional training, assistance with implementing source water protection plans, and assistance with implementing monitoring plans, rules, regulations, and water security enhancements.*

(B) *PREFERENCE.*—*To ensure that technical assistance funding is used in a manner that is most beneficial to the small and rural communities of a State, the Administrator shall give preference under this paragraph to nonprofit organizations that, as determined by the Administrator, are the most qualified and experienced in providing training and technical assistance to small public water systems and that the small community water systems in that State find to be the most beneficial and effective.*

(C) *LIMITATION.*—*No grant or cooperative agreement provided or otherwise made available under this section may be used for litigation pursuant to section 1449.*