

112TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 2166

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

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 7, 2012

Mr. CONRAD (for himself, Mr. WICKER, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. INHOFE, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. TESTER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. RISCH, Mr. MORAN, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, and Mr. BAUCUS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works

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## 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—

1           (1) the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments  
2           of 1996 (Public Law 104–182) authorized technical  
3           assistance for small and rural communities to assist  
4           those communities in complying with regulations  
5           promulgated pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water  
6           Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.);

7           (2) technical assistance and compliance train-  
8           ing—

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

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

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

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

23           (5) in addition to being the main source of com-  
24           pliance assistance, small and rural water technical

1 assistance has been the main source of emergency  
2 response assistance in small and rural communities.

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

4 It is the sense of Congress that—

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

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

13 **SEC. 4. FUNDING PRIORITIES.**

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

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

19 (2) in paragraph (5) (as so designated), by  
20 striking “1997 through 2003” and inserting “2012  
21 through 2017”; and

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

23 “(8) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.—

24 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator  
25 may use amounts made available to carry out

1           this section to provide technical assistance to  
2           nonprofit organizations that provide to small  
3           public water systems onsite technical assistance,  
4           circuit-rider technical assistance programs, on-  
5           site and regional training, assistance with im-  
6           plementing source water protection plans, and  
7           assistance with implementation monitoring  
8           plans, rules, regulations, and water security en-  
9           hancements.

10           “(B) PREFERENCE.—To ensure that tech-  
11           nical assistance funding is used in a manner  
12           that is most beneficial to the small and rural  
13           communities of a State, the Administrator shall  
14           give preference under this paragraph to non-  
15           profit organizations that, as determined by the  
16           Administrator, are the most qualified and expe-  
17           rienced and that the small community water  
18           systems in that State find to be the most bene-  
19           ficial and effective.”.

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