

113TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5659

To reduce Federal, State, and local costs of providing high-quality drinking water to millions of Americans residing in rural communities by facilitating greater use of cost-effective well water systems, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 18, 2014

Mr. STUTZMAN introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, 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 reduce Federal, State, and local costs of providing high-quality drinking water to millions of Americans residing in rural communities by facilitating greater use of cost-effective well 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 “Water Supply Cost
5 Savings Act” or the “Savings Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds that—

3 (1) the United States is facing a drinking water
4 infrastructure funding crisis; the Environmental
5 Protection Agency (the “EPA”) projects a \$384 bil-
6 lion shortfall in funding over the next 20 years; and
7 this funding challenge is particularly acute in rural
8 America;

9 (2) there are 52,000 community water systems
10 in the United States, of which 41,801 are small
11 community water systems;

12 (3) EPA’s most recent Drinking Water Needs
13 Survey placed the shortfall in drinking water infra-
14 structure funding for small communities (3,300 or
15 fewer persons) at \$64.5 billion;

16 (4) small communities often cannot finance the
17 construction and maintenance of drinking water sys-
18 tems because the cost per resident for this invest-
19 ment would be prohibitively expensive;

20 (5) drought conditions have placed significant
21 strains on existing surface water supplies, and many
22 communities across the country are now considering
23 the use of groundwater and community well systems
24 to provide drinking water; and

25 (6) 42 million Americans receive their drinking
26 water from individual wells, and millions more rely

1 upon community well systems for their drinking
2 water.

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

4 It is the sense of the Congress that—

5 (1) providing rural communities with the knowl-
6 edge and resources necessary to fully utilize wells
7 and community well systems can save local, State,
8 and Federal governments and taxpayers billions of
9 dollars over the next two decades;

10 (2) wells and community well systems can pro-
11 vide safe and affordable drinking water to millions
12 of Americans; and

13 (3) the Federal Government lacks the resources
14 to finance the drinking water infrastructure needs of
15 millions of citizens residing in rural America, and
16 wells and community well systems can help signifi-
17 cantly to close this funding gap.

18 **SEC. 4. DRINKING WATER TECHNOLOGY CLEARINGHOUSE.**

19 The Administrator of the Environmental Protection
20 Agency and the Secretary of Agriculture shall—

21 (1) update existing programs of the Agency and
22 the Department of Agriculture designed to provide
23 drinking water technical assistance to include infor-
24 mation on cost-effective, innovative, and alternative

1 drinking water delivery systems, including systems
2 that are supported by wells; and

3 (2) disseminate information on the cost effec-
4 tiveness of wells and well systems to communities
5 and not-for-profit organizations seeking Federal
6 funding for drinking water systems serving 3,300 or
7 fewer persons.

8 **SEC. 5. WATER SYSTEM ASSESSMENT.**

9 In any application for a Federal grant or loan for
10 a drinking water system serving 3,300 or fewer persons,
11 a unit of local government or not-for-profit organization
12 shall certify that it has considered, as an alternative drink-
13 ing water supply, drinking water delivery systems sourced
14 by publicly owned individual wells, shared wells, and com-
15 munity wells.

16 **SEC. 6. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

17 Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment
18 of this Act, the Administrator of the Environmental Pro-
19 tection Agency and the Secretary of Agriculture shall re-
20 port to Congress on—

21 (1) the utilization of innovative and alternative
22 drinking water systems described in this Act;

23 (2) the range of cost savings for communities
24 utilizing innovative and alternative drinking water
25 systems described in this Act; and

1 (3) the utilization of drinking water technical
2 assistance programs operated by the Agency and the
3 Department.

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