

106TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 2296

To provide grants for special environmental assistance for the regulation of communities and habitat (SEARCH) to small communities.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 27, 2000

Mr. CRAPO 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 provide grants for special environmental assistance for the regulation of communities and habitat (SEARCH) to small communities.

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 “Project SEARCH Act  
5 of 2000”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

8 (1) small communities often struggle to meet  
9 environmental goals due to difficulty in securing  
10 funding;

1           (2) often, traditional sources of funding for en-  
 2           vironmental projects require expensive, complex  
 3           studies or other application materials;

4           (3) a small community that secures funding for  
 5           an environmental project from a traditional source  
 6           often is unable to provide matching funds required  
 7           by the traditional source; and

8           (4) small communities would benefit from a  
 9           grant program designed to provide funding for envi-  
 10          ronmental projects—

11                   (A) through a simplified application proc-  
 12                   ess; and

13                   (B) without the requirement of matching  
 14                   funds.

15 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

16       In this Act:

17           (1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-  
 18           trator” means the Administrator of the Environ-  
 19           mental Protection Agency.

20           (2) COUNCIL.—The term “council” means an  
 21           independent citizens’ council established by section  
 22           4(b) .

23           (3) ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT.—

24                   (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “environ-  
 25                   mental project” means a project that is carried

1 out for the benefit of the public health or wel-  
 2 fare or the environment.

3 (B) INCLUSION.—The term “environ-  
 4 mental project” includes an initial feasibility  
 5 study.

6 (4) REGION.—The term “region” means a geo-  
 7 graphic area of a State, as determined by the Gov-  
 8 ernor of the State.

9 (5) SEARCH GRANT.—The term “SEARCH  
 10 grant” means a grant for special environmental as-  
 11 sistance for the regulation of communities and habi-  
 12 tat awarded under section 4(c)(3).

13 (6) SMALL COMMUNITY.—The term “small  
 14 community” means an incorporated or unincor-  
 15 porated community having a population of not more  
 16 than 2500 individuals.

17 **SEC. 4. SEARCH GRANT PROGRAM.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—

19 (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established the  
 20 SEARCH Grant Program.

21 (2) GRANT TO COUNCIL.—Not later than No-  
 22 vember 1 of each year after the date of enactment  
 23 of this Act, the Administrator shall transfer  
 24 \$1,000,000 to the Governor of each State, for use  
 25 by the council in the State.

1 (b) INDEPENDENT CITIZENS' COUNCIL.—

2 (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in  
3 each State an independent citizens' council.

4 (2) COMPOSITION.—

5 (A) IN GENERAL.—

6 (i) REPRESENTATION.—Each council  
7 shall be composed of 9 members that  
8 broadly represent the general population of  
9 the State in which the council is estab-  
10 lished, as determined by the Governor of  
11 the State.

12 (ii) APPOINTMENT.—A member of a  
13 council shall be appointed by the Governor  
14 of the State, except that—

15 (I) not more than 1 member shall  
16 be an agent, employee, or official of  
17 the Federal Government; and

18 (II) not more than 1 member  
19 shall be an agent, employee, or official  
20 of the State government.

21 (B) CHAIRPERSON.—Each council shall se-  
22 lect a chairperson from among the members of  
23 the council, except that a member described in  
24 subclause (I) or (II) of subparagraph (A)(ii)  
25 shall not serve as chairperson.

1 (3) SEARCH GRANTS.—

2 (A) IN GENERAL.—Each council shall re-  
3 view applications for and award SEARCH  
4 grants from the funds transferred under sub-  
5 section (a)(1) to small communities that meet  
6 the eligibility criteria under subsection (c).

7 (B) NO MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—A  
8 small community that receives a SEARCH  
9 grant under this section shall not be required to  
10 provide matching funds.

11 (c) SEARCH GRANTS TO SMALL COMMUNITIES.—

12 (1) ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA.—Each council may  
13 award a SEARCH grant under this section to a  
14 small community for an environmental project for  
15 which the small community—

16 (A)(i) is unable to secure funding; or

17 (ii) is underfunded;

18 (B) has incurred unexpected expenses dur-  
19 ing construction of the environmental project;  
20 or

21 (C) needs funds for initial feasibility or en-  
22 vironmental studies before applying to tradi-  
23 tional funding sources.

24 (2) APPLICATION.—To apply for a SEARCH  
25 grant under this section, a small community shall

1 submit to the council in the State in which the small  
2 community is located an application that includes—

3 (A) a description of the proposed environ-  
4 mental project (including an explanation of how  
5 the project would assist the small community in  
6 complying with environmental regulations);

7 (B) an explanation of why the project is  
8 important to the community;

9 (C) a description of all actions taken with  
10 respect to the project, including any attempt to  
11 secure funding, as of the date of the applica-  
12 tion; and

13 (D) a SEARCH grant application form  
14 provided by the council, completed and with all  
15 required supporting documentation.

16 (3) APPLICATION AND REVIEW.—

17 (A) APPLICATION.—An application for a  
18 SEARCH grant under this section shall be sub-  
19 mitted to a council not later than February 5  
20 of the fiscal year for which the grant is to be  
21 awarded.

22 (B) REVIEW AND AWARD.—Not later than  
23 March 5 of each year, each council shall—

24 (i) review all applications received  
25 under subparagraph (A); and

1                   (ii) award SEARCH grants to small  
2 communities based on an evaluation of the  
3 eligibility criteria under paragraph (1).

4                   (C) UNEXPENDED FUNDS.—

5                   (i) IN GENERAL.—If any unexpended  
6 funds remain after SEARCH grants are  
7 awarded under subparagraph (B), the  
8 council may repeat the application and re-  
9 view process so that any remaining funds  
10 may be awarded not later than July 30.

11                   (ii) RETENTION OF FUNDS.—Any un-  
12 expended funds that are not awarded  
13 under subparagraph (B) or clause (i) shall  
14 be retained by the council for award during  
15 the following year.

16                   (d) REPORT.—Not later than September 1 of the  
17 first fiscal year for which a SEARCH grant is awarded  
18 by a council under this section, and annually thereafter,  
19 the council shall submit to the Administrator a report  
20 that—

21                   (1) describes the number of SEARCH grants  
22 awarded during the fiscal year;

23                   (2) identifies each small community that re-  
24 ceived a SEARCH grant during the fiscal year;

1           (3) describes the project or purpose for which  
2 each SEARCH grant was awarded; and

3           (4) describes the status of each project or por-  
4 tion of a project for which a SEARCH grant was  
5 awarded, including a project or portion of a project  
6 for which a SEARCH grant was awarded for any  
7 fiscal year before the fiscal year in which the report  
8 is submitted.

9 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

10           (1) GRANT FUNDING.—

11           (A) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to  
12 be appropriated to carry out section 4(a)(2)  
13 \$1,000,000 for each State for each fiscal year.

14           (B) ACTUAL APPROPRIATION.—If funds to  
15 carry out section 4(a)(2) are made available for  
16 a fiscal year in an amount that is less than the  
17 amount authorized under subparagraph (A) for  
18 the fiscal year, the appropriated funds shall be  
19 divided equally among the 50 States.

20           (2) OTHER EXPENSES.—There are authorized  
21 to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to  
22 carry out the provisions of this Act other than sec-  
23 tion 4(a)(2).

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