

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1642

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

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 22, 2015

Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, and Mr. TESTER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works

A BILL

To reduce Federal, State, and local costs of providing high-quality drinking water to millions of people in the United States residing in rural communities by facilitating greater use of cost-effective alternative systems, including 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”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

1 (1) the United States is facing a drinking water
2 infrastructure funding crisis;

3 (2) the Environmental Protection Agency
4 projects a shortfall of approximately
5 \$384,000,000,000 in funding for drinking water in-
6 frastructure from 2015 to 2035 and this funding
7 challenge is particularly acute in rural communities
8 in the United States;

9 (3) there are approximately 52,000 community
10 water systems in the United States, of which nearly
11 42,000 are small community water systems;

12 (4) the Drinking Water Needs Survey con-
13 ducted by the Environmental Protection Agency in
14 2011 placed the shortfall in drinking water infra-
15 structure funding for small communities, which con-
16 sist of 3,300 or fewer persons, at \$64,500,000,000;

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

21 (6) drought conditions have placed significant
22 strains on existing surface water supplies;

23 (7) many communities across the United States
24 are considering the use of groundwater and commu-
25 nity well systems to provide drinking water; and

1 (8) approximately 42,000,000 people in the
2 United States receive drinking water from individual
3 wells and millions more rely on community well sys-
4 tems for drinking water.

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

6 It is the sense of Congress that providing rural com-
7 munities with the knowledge and resources necessary to
8 fully use alternative drinking water systems, including
9 wells and community well systems, can provide safe and
10 affordable drinking water to millions of people in the
11 United States.

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

13 The Administrator of the Environmental Protection
14 Agency and the Secretary of Agriculture shall—

15 (1) update existing programs of the Environ-
16 mental Protection Agency and the Department of
17 Agriculture designed to provide drinking water tech-
18 nical assistance to include information on cost-effec-
19 tive, innovative, and alternative drinking water deliv-
20 ery systems, including systems that are supported by
21 wells; and

22 (2) disseminate information on the cost effec-
23 tiveness of alternative drinking water delivery sys-
24 tems, including wells and well systems, to commu-
25 nities and not-for-profit organizations seeking Fed-

1 eral funding for drinking water systems serving 500
2 or fewer persons.

3 **SEC. 5. WATER SYSTEM ASSESSMENT.**

4 Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in any
5 application for a grant or loan from the Federal Govern-
6 ment or a State that is using Federal assistance for a
7 drinking water system serving 500 or fewer persons, a unit
8 of local government or not-for-profit organization shall
9 self-certify that the unit of local government or organiza-
10 tion has considered, as an alternative drinking water sup-
11 ply, drinking water delivery systems sourced by publicly
12 owned—

- 13 (1) individual wells;
- 14 (2) shared wells; and
- 15 (3) community 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 pro-
20 vide to Congress a report that describes—

- 21 (1) the use of innovative and alternative drink-
22 ing water systems described in this Act;
- 23 (2) the range of cost savings for communities
24 using innovative and alternative drinking water sys-
25 tems described in this Act; and

1 (3) the use of drinking water technical assist-
2 ance programs operated by the Administrator of the
3 Environmental Protection Agency and the Secretary
4 of Agriculture.

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