

114TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 611

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## AN ACT

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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Grassroots Rural and  
3 Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds that—

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

12 (2) technical assistance and compliance train-  
13 ing—

14 (A) ensures that Federal regulations do  
15 not overwhelm the resources of small and rural  
16 communities; and

17 (B) provides small and rural communities  
18 lacking technical resources with the necessary  
19 skills to improve and protect water resources;

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

23 (4) small and rural communities have the great-  
24 est difficulty providing safe, affordable public drink-  
25 ing water and wastewater services due to limited

1 economies of scale and lack of technical expertise;  
2 and

3 (5) in addition to being the main source of com-  
4 pliance assistance, small and rural water technical  
5 assistance has been the main source of emergency  
6 response assistance in small and rural communities.

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

8 It is the sense of Congress that—

9 (1) to assist small and rural communities most  
10 effectively, the Administrator of the Environmental  
11 Protection Agency should prioritize the types of  
12 technical assistance that are most beneficial to those  
13 communities, based on input from those commu-  
14 nities; and

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

18 **SEC. 4. FUNDING PRIORITIES.**

19 Section 1442(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42  
20 U.S.C. 300j-1(e)) is amended—

21 (1) by designating the first through seventh  
22 sentences as paragraphs (1) through (7), respec-  
23 tively;

1           (2) in paragraph (5) (as so designated), by  
2 striking “1997 through 2003” and inserting “2015  
3 through 2020”; and

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

5           “(8) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.—

6           “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator  
7 may use amounts made available to carry out  
8 this section to provide grants or cooperative  
9 agreements to nonprofit organizations that pro-  
10 vide to small public water systems onsite tech-  
11 nical assistance, circuit-rider technical assist-  
12 ance programs, multistate, regional technical  
13 assistance programs, onsite and regional train-  
14 ing, assistance with implementing source water  
15 protection plans, and assistance with imple-  
16 menting monitoring plans, rules, regulations,  
17 and water security enhancements.

18           “(B) PREFERENCE.—To ensure that tech-  
19 nical assistance funding is used in a manner  
20 that is most beneficial to the small and rural  
21 communities of a State, the Administrator shall  
22 give preference under this paragraph to non-  
23 profit organizations that, as determined by the  
24 Administrator, are the most qualified and expe-  
25 rienced in providing training and technical as-

1           sistance to small public water systems and that  
2           the small community water systems in that  
3           State find to be the most beneficial and effec-  
4           tive.

5           “(C) LIMITATION.—No grant or coopera-  
6           tive agreement provided or otherwise made  
7           available under this section may be used for liti-  
8           gation pursuant to section 1449.”.

Passed the Senate June 9, 2015.

Attest:

*Secretary.*

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