

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3328

To amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to establish a program to provide assistance to small communities for use in carrying out projects and activities necessary to achieve or maintain compliance with drinking water standards.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 16, 2003

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to establish a program to provide assistance to small communities for use in carrying out projects and activities necessary to achieve or maintain compliance with drinking water standards.

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 “Community Drinking
5 Water Assistance Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds that—

1 (1) drinking water standards proposed and in
2 effect as of the date of the enactment of this Act will
3 place a large financial burden on many public water
4 systems, especially those public water systems in
5 rural communities serving small populations;

6 (2) the limited scientific, technical, and profes-
7 sional resources available in small communities com-
8 plicate the implementation of regulatory require-
9 ments;

10 (3) small communities often cannot afford to
11 meet water quality standards because of the ex-
12 penses associated with upgrading public water sys-
13 tems and training personnel to operate and maintain
14 the public water systems;

15 (4) small communities do not have a tax base
16 for dealing with the costs of upgrading their public
17 water systems;

18 (5) small communities face high per capita
19 costs in improving drinking water quality;

20 (6) small communities would greatly benefit
21 from a grant program designed to provide funding
22 for water quality projects;

23 (7) as of the date of the enactment of this Act,
24 there is no Federal program in effect that ade-
25 quately meets the needs of small, primarily rural

1 communities with respect to public water systems;
2 and

3 (8) since new, more protective arsenic drinking
4 water standards proposed by the Clinton and Bush
5 administrations, respectively, are expected to be im-
6 plemented in 2006, the grant program established
7 by the amendment made by this Act should be im-
8 plemented in a manner that ensures that the imple-
9 mentation of those new standards is not delayed.

10 **SEC. 3. ASSISTANCE FOR SMALL PUBLIC WATER SYSTEMS.**

11 (a) DEFINITION OF INDIAN TRIBE.—Section
12 1401(14) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C.
13 300f(14)) is amended in the second sentence by striking
14 “1452,” and inserting “1452 and part G,”.

15 (b) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—The Safe
16 Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.) is amended
17 by adding at the end the following:

18 **“PART G—ASSISTANCE FOR SMALL PUBLIC**

19 **WATER SYSTEMS**

20 **“SEC. 1471. DEFINITIONS.**

21 “In this part:

22 “(1) ELIGIBLE ACTIVITY.—

23 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘eligible ac-
24 tivity’ means a project or activity concerning a
25 small public water system that is carried out by

1 an eligible entity to comply with drinking water
2 standards.

3 “(B) INCLUSIONS.—The term ‘eligible ac-
4 tivity’ includes—

5 “(i) obtaining technical assistance;
6 and

7 “(ii) training and certifying operators
8 of small public water systems.

9 “(C) EXCLUSION.—The term ‘eligible ac-
10 tivity’ does not include any project or activity to
11 increase the population served by a small public
12 water system, except to the extent that the Ad-
13 ministrator determines such a project or activ-
14 ity to be necessary to—

15 “(i) achieve compliance with a na-
16 tional primary drinking water regulation;
17 and

18 “(ii) provide a water supply to a pop-
19 ulation that, as of the date of the enact-
20 ment of this part, is not served by a safe
21 public water system.

22 “(2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligible en-
23 tity’ means a small public water system that—

24 “(A) is located in a State or an area gov-
25 erned by an Indian Tribe; and

1 “(B)(i) if located in a State, serves a com-
2 munity that, under affordability criteria estab-
3 lished by the State under section 1452(d)(3), is
4 determined by the State to be—

5 “(I) a disadvantaged community; or

6 “(II) a community that may become a
7 disadvantaged community as a result of
8 carrying out an eligible activity; or

9 “(ii) if located in an area governed by an
10 Indian Tribe, serves a community that, under
11 affordability criteria published by the Adminis-
12 trator under section 1452(d)(3), is determined
13 by the Administrator in consultation with the
14 Secretary to be—

15 “(I) a disadvantaged community; or

16 “(II) a community that may become a
17 disadvantaged community as a result of
18 carrying out an eligible activity.

19 “(3) PROGRAM.—The term ‘Program’ means
20 the small public water system assistance program es-
21 tablished under section 1472(a).

22 “(4) SECRETARY.—The term ‘Secretary’ means
23 the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting
24 through the Director of the Indian Health Service.

1 “(5) SMALL PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM.—The
 2 term ‘small public water system’ means a public
 3 water system (whether a community water system or
 4 a noncommunity water system) that serves—

5 “(A) a community with a population of not
 6 more than 200,000 individuals; or

7 “(B) a public water system located in—

8 “(i) Bernalillo or Sandoval County,
 9 New Mexico;

10 “(ii) Scottsdale, Arizona;

11 “(iii) Mesquite or Washoe County,
 12 Nevada; or

13 “(iv) El Paso County, Texas.

14 **“SEC. 1472. SMALL PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM ASSISTANCE**
 15 **PROGRAM.**

16 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

17 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after
 18 the date of the enactment of this part, the Adminis-
 19 trator shall establish a program to provide grants to
 20 eligible entities for use in carrying out eligible activi-
 21 ties to comply with drinking water standards.

22 “(2) PRIORITY.—Subject to paragraph (3), the
 23 Administrator shall award grants under the Pro-
 24 gram to eligible entities based on—

1 “(A) first, the financial need of the com-
2 munity for the grant assistance, as determined
3 by the Administrator; and

4 “(B) second, with respect to the commu-
5 nity in which the eligible entity is located, the
6 per capita cost of complying with drinking
7 water standards, as determined by the Adminis-
8 trator.

9 “(3) SMALL COMMUNITIES.—In making grants
10 under this section, the Administrator shall ensure
11 that not less 20 percent of grant funds provided for
12 each fiscal year are used to carry out eligible activi-
13 ties in communities with a population of less than
14 50,000 individuals.

15 “(b) APPLICATION PROCESS.—

16 “(1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity that
17 seeks to receive a grant under the Program shall
18 submit to the Administrator, on such form as the
19 Administrator shall prescribe (not to exceed 3 pages
20 in length), an application to receive the grant.

21 “(2) COMPONENTS.—The application shall in-
22 clude—

23 “(A) a description of the eligible activities
24 for which the grant is needed;

1 “(B) a description of the efforts made by
2 the eligible entity, as of the date of submission
3 of the application, to comply with drinking
4 water standards; and

5 “(C) any other information required to be
6 included by the Administrator.

7 “(3) REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF APPLICA-
8 TIONS.—

9 “(A) IN GENERAL.—On receipt of an ap-
10 plication under paragraph (1), the Adminis-
11 trator shall forward the application to the
12 Council.

13 “(B) APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL.—Not
14 later than 90 days after receiving the rec-
15 ommendations of the Council under subsection
16 (e) concerning an application, after taking into
17 consideration the recommendations, the Admin-
18 istrator shall—

19 “(i) approve the application and
20 award a grant to the applicant; or

21 “(ii) disapprove the application.

22 “(C) RESUBMISSION.—If the Adminis-
23 trator disapproves an application under sub-
24 paragraph (B)(ii), the Administrator shall—

1 “(i) inform the applicant in writing of
2 the disapproval (including the reasons for
3 the disapproval); and

4 “(ii) provide to the applicant a dead-
5 line by which the applicant may revise and
6 resubmit the application.

7 “(c) COST SHARING.—

8 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
9 graph (2), the Federal share of the cost of carrying
10 out an eligible activity using funds from a grant pro-
11 vided under the Program shall not exceed 90 per-
12 cent.

13 “(2) WAIVER.—The Administrator may waive
14 the requirement to pay the non-Federal share of the
15 cost of carrying out an eligible activity using funds
16 from a grant provided under the Program if the Ad-
17 ministrator determines that an eligible entity is un-
18 able to pay, or would experience significant financial
19 hardship if required to pay, the non-Federal share.

20 “(d) ENFORCEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF
21 STANDARDS.—

22 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2),
23 the Administrator shall not enforce any standard for
24 drinking water under this Act that takes effect after
25 the date of the enactment of this part (including any

1 regulation promulgated under this Act that takes ef-
2 fect after such date) against an eligible entity during
3 the period beginning on the date on which the eligi-
4 ble entity submits an application for a grant under
5 the Program and ending, as applicable, on—

6 “(A) the deadline specified in subsection
7 (b)(3)(C)(ii), if the application is disapproved
8 and not resubmitted; or

9 “(B) the date that is 3 years after the date
10 on which the eligible entity receives a grant
11 under this part, if the application is approved.

12 “(2) ARSENIC STANDARDS.—No standard for
13 arsenic in drinking water promulgated under this
14 Act (including a standard in any regulation promul-
15 gated before the date of enactment of this part)
16 shall be implemented or enforced by the Adminis-
17 trator in any State until the earlier of January 1,
18 2006, or such date as the Administrator certifies to
19 the Congress that—

20 “(A) the Program has been implemented
21 in the State; and

22 “(B) the State has made substantial
23 progress, as determined by the Administrator in
24 consultation with the Governor of the State, in

1 complying with drinking water standards under
2 this Act.

3 “(e) **ROLE OF COUNCIL.**—The Council shall—

4 “(1) review applications for grants from eligible
5 entities received by the Administrator under sub-
6 section (b);

7 “(2) for each application, recommend to the
8 Administrator whether the application should be ap-
9 proved or disapproved; and

10 “(3) take into consideration priority lists devel-
11 oped by States for the use of drinking water treat-
12 ment revolving loan funds under section 1452.

13 **“SEC. 1473. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

14 “‘There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out
15 this part \$1,900,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2004
16 through 2009.’”.

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