

Water: President Obama Signs Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems



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A United States House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee news release announced that President Obama signed into law the Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act (S.611).

The bill is intended to assist smaller and rural communities with the financial challenges of complying with the Safe Drinking Water Act regulations.

S.611 authorizes the appropriation of \$15 million annually over the 2016 to 2020 period for an Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") program that provides technical assistance to small public water systems. The authorization for this program expired in 2003. However, the Congressional Budget Office previously noted an appropriation of \$13 million for fiscal year 2015.

S.611 states that the Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") may use amounts made available to carry out the relevant requirements to provide grants or cooperative agreements to nonprofit organizations assisting small public water systems.

Such assistance may include:

- Onsite technical assistance
- Circuit-rider technical assistance programs
- Multistate, regional technical assistance programs
- Onsite and regional training
- Assistance with implementing source water protection plans
- Assistance with implementing monitoring plans, rules, regulations, and water security enhancements.

The bill also states that the EPA must give preference to nonprofit organizations that are determined by the agency to be the most qualified and experienced in providing training and technical assistance to small public water systems that the small community water systems in that state find to be most beneficial and effective.

A copy of the legislation along with a Congressional Budget Office cost estimate can be [downloaded here](#).