



**CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE  
COST ESTIMATE**

May 8, 2015

**S. 611**  
**Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act**  
*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works  
on April 29, 2015*

**SUMMARY**

S. 611 would authorize the appropriation of \$15 million annually over the 2016-2020 period for the Environmental Protection Agency’s program that provides technical assistance to small public water systems. The authorization for this program expired in 2003, but the program received an appropriation of \$13 million for fiscal year 2015. CBO estimates that implementing S. 611 would cost \$67 million over the next five years, assuming appropriation of the authorized amounts. Pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply to S. 611 because it would not affect direct spending or revenues.

S. 611 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA).

**ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

The estimated budgetary impact of S. 611 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and environment).

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars					2016-2020
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
<b>CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION</b>						
Authorization Level	15	15	15	15	15	75
Estimated Outlays	8	14	15	15	15	67

## **BASIS OF ESTIMATE**

For this estimate, CBO assumes that S. 611 will be enacted by the end of fiscal year 2015, that the specified amounts will be appropriated in each year starting in 2016, and that outlays will follow historical spending patterns for the technical assistance program. The legislation would authorize funding for nonprofit organizations to help small public water systems achieve and maintain compliance with national regulations and to support training and engineering evaluations of those water systems.

**PAY-AS-YOU-GO CONSIDERATIONS:** None.

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT**

S. 611 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA. Activities authorized in the bill would assist public water systems to comply with national standards for primary drinking water.

## **ESTIMATE PREPARED BY:**

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One Hundred Fourteenth Congress  
of the  
United States of America

AT THE FIRST SESSION

*Began and held at the City of Washington on Tuesday,  
the sixth day of January, two thousand and fifteen*

An Act

To amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to reauthorize technical assistance to small public water systems, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of  
the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the "Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act".

**SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

Congress finds that—

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

(2) technical assistance and compliance training—

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

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

(3) across the United States, more than 90 percent of the community water systems serve a population of less than 10,000 individuals;

(4) small and rural communities have the greatest difficulty providing safe, affordable public drinking water and wastewater services due to limited economies of scale and lack of technical expertise; and

(5) in addition to being the main source of compliance assistance, small and rural water technical assistance has been the main source of emergency response assistance in small and rural communities.

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

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) to assist small and rural communities most effectively, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency should prioritize the types of technical assistance that are most beneficial to those communities, based on input from those communities; and

(2) local support is the key to making Federal assistance initiatives work in small and rural communities to the maximum benefit.

**SEC. 4. FUNDING PRIORITIES.**

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

(1) by designating the first through seventh sentences as paragraphs (1) through (7), respectively;

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

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(8) **NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.**—

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Administrator may use amounts made available to carry out this section to provide grants or cooperative agreements to nonprofit organizations that provide to small public water systems onsite technical assistance, circuit-rider technical assistance programs, multistate, regional technical assistance programs, onsite and regional training, assistance with implementing source water protection plans, and assistance with implementing monitoring plans, rules, regulations, and water security enhancements.

“(B) **PREFERENCE.**—To ensure that technical assistance funding is used in a manner that is most beneficial to the small and rural communities of a State, the Administrator shall give preference under this paragraph to nonprofit organizations that, as determined by the Administrator, are the most qualified and experienced in providing training and technical assistance to small public water systems and that the small community water systems in that State find to be the most beneficial and effective.

“(C) **LIMITATION.**—No grant or cooperative agreement provided or otherwise made available under this section may be used for litigation pursuant to section 1449.”.

*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

*Vice President of the United States and  
President of the Senate.*