



AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION

Your Comprehensive
Public Works Resource

www.apwa.net

2345 Grand Blvd., Suite 700
Kansas City, MO 64108-2625
816-472-6100 800-848-APWA
fax 816-472-1610

1275 K Street NW, Suite 750
Washington, DC 20005-4083
202-408-9541
fax 202-408-9542

October 28, 2015

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman
Energy & Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Energy & Commerce Committee
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Ranking Member Pallone:

I am writing on behalf of the American Public Works Association (APWA) in support of S. 611/H.R. 2853, the Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act. We appreciate the committee's attention to protecting our nation's drinking water supply. APWA believes this common-sense legislation will help small and rural communities provide safe drinking water and comply with federal drinking water regulations by reauthorizing the technical assistance program created by the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA).

Protecting the nation's drinking water is essential to public health and the quality of life our citizens enjoy. APWA's 29,000 members play a critical role in providing clean and safe water to their communities which are large and small, urban and rural. Chief among their responsibilities are to plan, design, build, operate and maintain water supply and wastewater treatment systems, stormwater management programs, and drainage and flood control infrastructure, among numerous other public assets. Our members include public works professionals from cities, counties and special districts, as well as their private sector partners. Our members take seriously their responsibility to balance the needs of their communities with protecting the environment and are committed to a partnership with federal, state, regional and local levels to assure a sustainable future.

As the designers, builders, and operators of drinking water systems, our members are dedicated to complying with the requirements of the SDWA. However, those in small and rural communities face significant challenges maintaining and replace their aging drinking and waste water infrastructure. These communities have reduced access to capital, and thus depend upon federal and state grants and loans to comply with the necessary, yet significant compliance burdens placed on them by the federal government. S. 611/H.R. 2853 reauthorizes an essential program for our members, and makes important improvements to it.

PRESIDENT
Brian R. Usher, PWLF

INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Larry W. Frevert, P.E., PWLF



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This legislation maintains the existing authorization of \$15 million for the SDWA's technical assistance program. During this time of scarce taxpayer dollars, we appreciate this funding level. Further, the bill requires that the most qualified and experienced nonprofits that the small community water systems prefer receive preference for any grants provided. Lastly, the bill will allow assistance for water security, monitoring plans, and source water protection.

The effect of inaction to modernizing our nation's water infrastructure will prove to be detrimental to our environment, economy and long term quality of life. As such, we are encouraged by bills like S. 611/H.R. 2853, the Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act, moving through the House in regular order.

On behalf of public works professionals nationally, we thank you for your leadership in protecting our nation's water resources. We are committed to working with you during the 114th Congress on our common goal of a sustainable water supply. If you have any questions, please contact Josh Reiner at JReiner@apwa.net, or (202) 218-6734.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian R. Usher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brian Usher, PWLF
President, APWA

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