

**Statement for the Record of Chairman Fred Upton  
Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy Hearing On “Technical  
Assistance for Rural Water Systems: S. 611 the Grassroots Rural and Small  
Community Water Systems Assistance Act.”  
October 22, 2015**

Most members of our committee give personal attention to the needs of the small, rural water service providers in our districts. In particular, Mr. Harper, Mr. Tonko, and Mr. Shimkus have been exchanging ideas on how to better meet these challenges within the economic and budgetary realities we face and should be commended in getting us to where we are today.

Many smaller and rural communities across Michigan and the United States face significant challenges in replacing, maintaining, and upgrading their aging drinking water infrastructure. These communities often face increased costs and burdens of meeting the complex regulatory requirements under the Safe Drinking Water Act. The bill before us today, which passed the Senate by Unanimous Consent back in June, and is the companion to H.R. 2853 – introduced by Subcommittee Vice Chairman Gregg Harper and Ranking Member Tonko – helps these communities alleviate that burden. It authorizes EPA’s current program in the Safe Water Drinking Act that provides technical assistance to small public water systems through 2020. It allows grants to non-profit organizations, but preference goes to non-profits that are most qualified and experienced and that the small water systems themselves find effective. It’s a win for the smaller and rural communities in my district back in Michigan and across the country.

By passing S. 611 unanimously, the Senate has given us a rare opportunity. We can do our part to help this reauthorization become law if we can all agree to

approve the bill exactly as it passed the Senate so that, if the House passes it, it will go directly to the President for his signature. We would avoid the risk of returning it to the Senate or negotiating differences in a Conference committee.

By helping this bill become law, we help our constituents who struggle every day to make sure that their small water systems meet those stringent regulatory requirements rooted in the Safe Drinking Water Act's standards. I hope that today's hearing gives all Members the information they need to support S. 611 as it takes another step toward enactment. I support the legislation and urge my colleagues to do likewise.