

Rural Water Issues Advisory [2/18/2019]

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Power of an Association: On Friday, the President signed into law the [final fiscal year 2019 appropriations bills](#) which included all NRWA funding priorities. The following final levels include NRWA priorities and certain new federal water programs in the act.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:

- **Clean Water State Revolving Fund** — \$1,694,000,000 (equal to 2018 enacted level).
- **Safe Drinking Water (SDWA) State Revolving Fund** — \$1,164,000,000 (equal to the 2018 enacted level).
- **Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act Grants** — \$68,000,000.
- **Assistance for Small and Disadvantaged Communities (Section 2104, [WIIN Act](#))** — \$25,000,000 shall be for grants for small and disadvantaged communities.
- **Reducing Lead in Drinking Water (Section 2105, [WIIN Act](#))** — \$25,000,000 shall be for grants for lead testing in school and child care program drinking water.
- **Lead Testing in School and Child Care Program Drinking Water (Section 2107, [WIIN Act](#))** — \$15,000,000 shall be for grants for reducing lead in drinking water.
- **SDWA Technical Assistance:** *"The bill provides \$15,000,000 for a competitive grant program for qualified non-profit organizations, excluding institutions of higher education, to provide technical assistance for improved water quality or safe drinking water and adequate waste water to small systems or individual private well owners. **The Agency shall provide \$12,300,000 for Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act, for activities specified under section 1442(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-l(e)(8))...** The Conferees remain concerned that the Agency made a decision to put out a multi-year Request for Applications for fiscal year 2017 and 2018 without the expressed approval of the Committees. The Agency is directed to obtain approval from the Committees for any similar activity in the future."* On [October 23, 2018](#), [EPA](#) responded to [38 U.S. Senators](#) who wrote EPA in July urging the Agency to follow the 2015 Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act ([PL 114-98](#)) in providing technical assistance. The Senators' letter explained that the predominant directive to EPA under the law is to prioritize the assistance that small communities find beneficial, *"We write once again to urge the EPA to adhere to the Congressional intent of PL 114-98. Under the law, EPA must give preference to both the organizations and the type of assistance that small and rural communities find most beneficial and effective when awarding drinking water technical assistance grants."* In response, EPA explained, *"The Agency evaluated applications based on the criteria outlined in Public Law 114-98, which include considering input from communities on the type of assistance and organization that those communities believe would be the most effective and beneficial. As outlined in the RFA, the EPA set aside 20 percent of the selection criteria to give applicants the opportunity to demonstrate their level of programmatic capability, experience, and support from small and rural communities."*

U.S. Department of Agriculture

- **Grassroots Source Water Protection** — \$6,500,000 under section [12400 of the Food Security Act of 1985](#) (16 U.S.C. 3839bb-2).
- **Circuit Rider Program** — \$19,000,000 a circuit rider program to provide technical assistance for rural water systems.
- **Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program** — \$623,690,000 for loan guarantees and grants for rural water, waste water, waste disposal, and solid waste management programs

authorized by sections 306, 306A, 306C, 306D, 306E, and 310B and described in sections 306C(a)(2), 306D, 306E, and 381E(d)(2) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act

- **Water & Waste Disposal Technical Assistance & Training Grants** — \$30,000,000 for technical assistance grants for rural water and waste systems pursuant to section 306(a)(14) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act.

[National Rural Water Association](#)

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The National Rural Water Association is the country's largest public drinking water and sanitation supply organization with over 30,000 members. Safe drinking water and sanitation are generally recognized as the most essential public health, public welfare, and civic necessities.

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