

# Rural Water Policy Advisory [3/19/2018]

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**Campaign to Save USDA Rural Water Funding Success:** Approximately one month after the President's budget proposed eliminating all USDA rural water funding, USDA Secretary Perdue testified before Senate Committee on Commerce in support of the USDA rural water initiatives. On Wednesday, Secretary Perdue said, *"Continued rural infrastructure investments for water, wastewater, and solid waste systems in small town America is crucial. The demand for water investment is great, with demand that exceeds the federal government's ability to support. Today, the USDA rural water program has a backlog of more than \$3.1 billion projects awaiting funding and financing. States with the highest backlog of requests for federal loans and grants include Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Texas, Washington, and West Virginia (USDA)."*

**Senators Wicker (MS), Hatch (UT), Rubio (FL) and Burr (NC) Question EPA on Allowing Small Communities to Delivery Tier 2 Notice with Internet:** This effort was initiated in 2015 by Senator Wicker who initially inquired about it to EPA ([6/11/15](#)). Subsequently, Senator Hatch ([1/11/18](#)) made an inquiry, and electronic mail correspondence was transmitted to EPA from Senators Burr and Rubio. Last week, the Agency replied that, *"EPA will continue to discuss the important issue of electronic delivery of certain public notices... as resources allow ([3/13/18, EPA to Senator Hatch](#))."* However, it appears the Agency had previously determined that the relief we are requesting is authorized. In the EPA response to Senator Wicker ([8/5/16](#)), EPA finds that *"Tier 2 requires mail or direct delivery with the bill and a method to notify those who do not receive a bill or do not have service connection addresses (such as renters, apartments, nursing homes, etc.). Posting on the internet is allowed as one of the methods to reach those consumers."* The relief is not being realized by small and rural communities because the Agency has not updated their January 3, 2013 [Policy Memorandum](#) which limits the delivery flexibility to Consumer Confidence Reports. Please [contact us](#) if your Senator is interested in contacting EPA to show the four Senators.

**Trump Administration Blames Russian Government for Cyberattacks on U.S. Utilities:** A Department of Homeland Security [security memo](#) characterizes the cyberattacks as a "multi-stage intrusion campaign by Russian government cyber actors who targeted small commercial facilities' networks." [The New York Times](#) says the memo screenshots indicate the Russian hackers had enough control of the systems that they could have manipulated or shut down the power plants. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said, "Since at least March 2016, Russian government cyber actors have also targeted U.S. government entities and multiple U.S. critical infrastructure sectors, including the energy, nuclear, commercial facilities, water, aviation, and critical manufacturing sectors."

**Over 70 U.S. House of Representatives Members Sign Letter Supporting Rural Water Technical Assistance:** Thank you Hawaii and New York Rural Water Associations for having Representatives Hanabusa (HI) and Katko (NY) sponsor this year's Dear Colleague letters. The following members agreed to support rural water technical assistance funding by cosigning the letters: (AL) Terri Sewell (AR) Rick Crawford, (AZ) Tom O'Halleran, (CA) Jerry McNerney, (CA) Jim Costa, (CA) John Garamendi, (CA) Mark DeSaulnier, (CO) Diana DeGette, (DE) Lisa Blunt Rochester, (FL) Al Lawson, (FL) Alcee L. Hastings, (FL) Darren Soto, (GU) Madeleine Z. Bordallo, (HI) Tulsi Gabbard, (IA) Dave Loebsack, (IL) Cheri Bustos, (IL) Luis V. Gutierrez, (IL) Robin L. Kelly, (LA) Cedric L. Richmond, (MA) James P. McGovern, (MA) Joseph P. Kennedy III, (MA) Michael E. Capuano, (MA) Niki Tsongas, (MA) Seth Moulton, (MA) Stephen F. Lynch, (MD) Jamie Raskin, (MI) Brenda L. Lawrence, (MI) Daniel T. Kildee, (MI) Jack Bergman, (MN) Collin C. Peterson, (MN) Keith Ellison, (MN) Richard M. Nolan, (MN) Tim Walz, (MO) Emanuel Cleaver, II, (MO) Sam Graves, (MO) Vicky Hartzler, (MP)

Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan, (MS) Bennie G. Thompson, (MS) Gregg Harper, (NC) Alma S. Adams, (NC) David Rouzer, (NC) G.K. Butterfield, (NC) Walter B. Jones, (NH) Ann McLane Kuster, (NH) Carol Shea-Porter, (NJ) Donald M. Payne, Jr., (NJ) Frank A. LoBiondo, (NJ) Josh Gottheimer, (NM) Ben Ray Luján, (NM) Michelle Lujan Grisham, (NV) Jacky Rosen, (NV) Ruben J. Kihuen, (NY) Chris Collins, (NY) Claudia Tenney, (NY) Elise Stefanik, (NY) John J. Faso, (NY) Katko, John, (NY) Kevin Cramer, (NY) Paul D. Tonko, (NY) Sean Patrick Maloney, (OR) Peter DeFazio, (SC) James E. Clyburn, (TX) Filemon Vela, (TX) Sheila Jackson Lee, (VA) Gerald E. Connolly, (VA) Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, (VI) Stacey E. Plaskett, (VT) Peter Welch, (WA) Denny Heck, (WA) Rick Larsen, (WA) Suzan K. DelBene, (WI) Gwen Moore, (WI) Ron Kind, (WV) David B. McKinley, P.E., and (WY) Liz Cheney.

**Senator Merkley (OR) Calls Trump's Infrastructure Plan a "Diabolical Selling off" of America's Infrastructure to Wall Street ([Breitbart](#)).**

**A Princeton Sociologist Spent 8 Years Asking Rural Americans Why They're So Angry with Washington ([VOX](#)).**

**Nashville School Officials Recorded Discussing Plans to "Bypass" Lead Filters in Schools ([NewsChannel 5](#)).**

**Top Bottled Water Brands Contaminated with Plastic Particles says University Report ([Yahoo News](#)).**

**Why Your Water Bill Is Rising Much Faster Than Inflation: Rate increases average 5.5% a year as utilities race to fix corroded pipes and overflowing sewers ([WSJ](#)).**

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[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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