



A Responsible, **Bipartisan** Path to Improving America's Water Infrastructure

The Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act

The bipartisan *Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act of 2021* (DWWIA 2021) will strengthen drinking water and wastewater infrastructure, foster economic growth, enhance the health and well-being of families across the nation, protect the environment, and invest in small, rural, and disadvantaged communities in fiscally responsible ways and without additional regulatory mandates.

Led by Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee Ranking Member Shelley Moore Capito, DWWIA 2021 builds upon the work by former EPW Chairman John Barrasso, taking programs from the *Drinking Water Infrastructure Act* (S. 3590) and the *America's Water Infrastructure Act* (S. 3591) – which were unanimously approved by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee last Congress – and authorizing them for five years. DWWIA 2021 is fiscally responsible and is essentially flat in annual authorizations from the Republican led-bills last Congress. The bill was approved unanimously by the Committee on March 24 and currently awaits floor consideration.

DWWIA 2021 contains no regulatory mandates, no climate change nor environmental justice policies, and prioritizes authorizations that afford maximum flexibility for states, tribes, and local communities, particularly in rural areas. The legislation will maximize long-term return on taxpayer investments by also improving resilience to new and emerging threats, including extreme weather events and emerging cybersecurity vulnerabilities.

The most significant investments are in the Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs), totaling nearly \$30 billion of the \$35.3 billion authorized in the legislation. The SRFs maximize authority for the states to determine how best to address drinking and wastewater challenges, utilizing a revolving loan fund to facilitate additional future investments. For the first time, DWWIA also creates a Clean Water Infrastructure Needs Survey to mirror that for the Drinking Water SRF, ensuring EPA can identify and quantify the actual need in this space.

DWWIA also authorizes or reauthorizes existing bipartisan grant programs to address priorities in rural America, including: addressing staffing challenges posed by a graying water utility workforce; funding connections to municipal water works or to decentralized wastewater infrastructure for rural households; investing in new and existing technologies to reduce water costs; investments in



tribal and Alaskan water and sanitation needs; and a robust rural set-aside for sewer overflow and stormwater reuse municipal grants that can address challenges posed by flooding.

This commonsense, bipartisan legislation addresses key infrastructure, public health, and environmental needs in this country – needs that are growing as water infrastructure ages or suffers from deferred maintenance at the same time the water workforce is shrinking – in a collaborative, regular order legislative process.

Specifically the legislation authorizes:

- A total of \$2.4 billion initially, gradually rising to \$3.25 billion per year for each of the **State Revolving Loan Funds**, providing program flexibilities to invest in community water projects that can address aging infrastructure and improve water quality.
- A total of \$975 million over five years for the **Assistance for Small and Disadvantaged Communities Grant Program** and other grant programs that assist rural and disadvantaged communities in improving access to clean, safe drinking water.
- A total of \$780 million over five years for **connecting low-income households to public water and wastewater services, decentralized wastewater services, and improving sanitation in Alaskan rural and native villages.**
- A total of \$250 million for **drinking water infrastructure improvement projects on Indian Reservations.**
- Up to \$350 million over five years for **sewer overflow and stormwater reuse programs in rural and financially distressed communities.**
- A total of \$500 million for the **removal and replacement of lead pipes**, as well as \$180 million for lead testing in schools and child care centers.
- A total of \$500 million to help public water systems increase **resiliency** to natural hazards, extreme weather events, and cybersecurity vulnerabilities.
- A five-year reauthorization of the Water Infrastructure Financing and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program to use loans to leverage taxpayer investments through innovative public-private partnerships (P3s).
- A total of \$25 million for **water workforce development** through education and apprenticeship programs.

The bipartisan DWWIA 2021 proves that the Senate can advance infrastructure legislation that meets our country's needs in a bipartisan way. This legislation makes important and consensus-driven investments in core water infrastructure needs. The success of this fiscally-responsible legislation demonstrates that Senate Republicans bring infrastructure solutions to the table.

For any questions about this significant, bipartisan drinking water and wastewater infrastructure legislation, please contact Travis Cone (travis_cone@epw.senate.gov) or Jess Kramer (jess_kramer@epw.senate.gov) on EPW Ranking Member Capito's staff.

