



THE WATER QUALITY PROTECTION AND JOB CREATION ACT OF 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

H.R. 1915, the *Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act of 2021*, authorizes billions of dollars in direct infrastructure investment over the next five years to address America's crumbling wastewater infrastructure and local water quality challenges.

Led by Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Chair Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment Chair Grace F. Napolitano (D-CA), and Representative Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), this **bipartisan bill** renews the federal commitment to improving local water infrastructure by providing an infusion of federal assistance for the construction, repair, and replacement of the nation's wastewater and stormwater conveyance and treatment facilities.

An amendment in the nature of a substitute (ANS) to H.R. 1915 authorizes historic levels of federal assistance to states and communities through the successful Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) program—the primary source of federal assistance for wastewater infrastructure construction—and directs states to maximize the use of federal grants under the SRF program to increase the affordability of wastewater infrastructure to local communities.

BACKGROUND ON THE CLEAN WATER SRF

Less than 50 years ago, many U.S. rivers were little more than open sewers, with some so polluted that they literally caught fire. The nation quickly learned that the actions of individual states, alone, could not protect national water quality because rivers and pollution do not respect local or state boundaries.

In response, Congress enacted the landmark **Clean Water Act** which fundamentally changed the way we address water pollution in this country, set strong standards, and provided substantial financial assistance to communities to meet local water quality challenges.

Yet even today, communities, especially economically-disadvantaged, rural, and Tribal communities, struggle to afford necessary wastewater infrastructure upgrades to protect human and environmental health, as well as the health of local economies.

To address these challenges, Congress must **recommit to increased federal investment** in wastewater infrastructure programs, including the Clean Water SRF program, and must **increase the affordability of wastewater infrastructure to local ratepayers**, as well as invest in the modernization of our infrastructure to **address the challenges posed by climate change**.

HIGHLIGHTED FUNDING PROVISIONS OF ANS TO H.R. 1915

- **Invests over \$50 billion in funding for clean water infrastructure, including:**
 - ✓ **\$40 billion** for the Clean Water SRFs – the primary source of federal funding for clean water infrastructure.
 - ✓ **\$2 billion** for projects to capture, treat, or reuse sewer overflows or stormwater.
 - ✓ **\$2.5 billion** for state water pollution control programs.
 - ✓ **\$1 billion** for clean water pilot programs and projects for climate resiliency.
 - ✓ **\$1 billion** for alternative water source and water recycling projects to augment existing water supplies.
 - ✓ **\$1 billion** in municipal grants to treat PFAS and other emerging contaminants.
 - ✓ **\$2.5 billion** for Tribal wastewater infrastructure assistance.
 - ✓ A **total of \$1 billion** for programs to provide for rural and Tribal technical assistance, for the repair and replacement of failed septic systems and cesspools, and for investment in smart water technologies.





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CRITICAL POLICY CHANGES IN ANS TO H.R. 1915

WATER NEEDS FACTS & FIGURES

\$300 BILLION. The amount of investment needed over the next 20 years according to EPA.

5 PERCENT. The percentage the federal government now pays for water projects. The federal government previously paid up to **75 percent** of the total costs of a project, with states and local governments making up the difference.

\$2.7 BILLION. According to the Indian Health Service, the total sanitation infrastructure needs for Indian homes and communities is **approximately \$2.7 billion**.

28,000 JOBS. According to the National Utility Contractors Association, every \$1 billion invested in our nation's water infrastructure **creates or sustains approximately 28,000** American jobs.

D+. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers' (ASCE) 2021 *Infrastructure Report Card*, **America's wastewater treatment infrastructure receives a grade of D+.**

In addition to providing historic investment levels for clean water infrastructure, the ANS to H.R. 1915 makes several critical changes to the Clean Water Act to address many of the concerns raised by local elected officials and stakeholders that struggle to afford critical wastewater infrastructure investments to improve water quality, as well as to address emerging concerns related to climate change.

The ANS to H.R. 1915:

- ✓ Requires states to distribute a minimum of 20% (and a maximum of 50%) of their SRF funds to municipalities as grants to increase the affordability of wastewater infrastructure to local communities, especially those that struggle to repay traditional federal loans.
- ✓ Permanently codifies the clean water "green reserve" that requires states to prioritize investments in green infrastructure, water- and energy-efficiency, and other efforts to increase the resiliency of utilities to climate change.
- ✓ Directs utilities to investigate measures to recover waste-energy from the operation of wastewater facilities, and where cost-effective, to implement such measures to reduce utility costs and recapture harmful greenhouse gases.
- ✓ Provides critical technical assistance to small, rural, and Tribal communities that often struggle to afford the costs of planning new infrastructure projects and to address local water quality challenges.
- ✓ Directs states to reduce the local share of projects to address combined or sanitary sewer overflows for economically-disadvantaged communities.
- ✓ Encourages wastewater utilities to address vulnerabilities to man-made or natural disasters, including vulnerabilities to climate change and cyberattacks.
- ✓ Authorizes critical assistance to address the backlog of wastewater infrastructure needs on Tribal lands, and permanently codifies a set-aside of Clean Water SRF funds for tribes and U.S. Territories.
- ✓ Invests critical clean water funding in state, local, and union workforce development programs.
- ✓ Establishes a new clean water grant program to invest in communities with failing septic systems and prioritizes funding to those communities that, today, lack access to adequate sewage treatment systems.

H.R. 1915 is supported by a diverse coalition of organizations, such as:

• American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) • American Iron and Steel Institute • American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) • American Sustainable Business Council • Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) • BlueGreen Alliance • Clean Water for All Coalition • Ducks Unlimited • Environment America • International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) • National Ass'n of Clean Water Administrators (NACWA) • Laborers' International Union (LIUNA) • National Ass'n of Counties (NACo) • National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA) • Trout Unlimited • United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters (UA) • U.S. Chamber of Commerce • U.S. Conference of Mayors • United Steelworkers • WaterReuse Association

