



# 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 **\$50 billion** in direct infrastructure investment over the next five years to address America’s crumbling wastewater infrastructure and local water quality challenges.

Led by House 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 network of wastewater and stormwater conveyance and treatment facilities. The *Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act of 2021* significantly increases the amount of Federal assistance made available to States and communities through the successful Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) program—the primary source of Federal assistance for wastewater infrastructure construction.

### THE WATER QUALITY PROTECTION AND JOB CREATION ACT OF 2021

H.R. 1915 authorizes **\$40 billion over five years** in wastewater infrastructure through the Clean Water SRF and an **additional \$10 billion in other Federal grant assistance** to improve water quality and help struggling communities upgrade their local wastewater infrastructure.

H.R. 1915 will create thousands of new, domestic jobs in the construction and wastewater sectors through increased investment in wastewater infrastructure. It will reduce the cost of constructing and maintaining that infrastructure, accelerate efforts to increase the resiliency of wastewater infrastructure, promote energy efficiency and water efficiency, and reduce the potential long-term operation and maintenance costs of publicly owned treatment works.

Last Congress, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure approved and the U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation similar to the *Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act of 2021* with bipartisan support; however, this legislation was not considered by the full Senate, and was not enacted into law.

For more information on Chair DeFazio’s vision for Rebuilding America’s Infrastructure, check out <https://transportation.house.gov/>.

### HIGHLIGHTED PROVISIONS

- Authorizes **\$40 billion over five years** to capitalize Clean Water SRFs – which provide low-interest loans, loan subsidizations, and grants to communities for wastewater infrastructure.
- Authorizes an additional **\$2 billion for grants to municipalities** to capture, treat, or reuse sewer overflows or stormwater.
- Authorizes **\$2.5 billion** in grants for States to implement State water pollution control programs.
- Provides **\$1 billion** to clean water pilot programs for watershed-based efforts to address wet weather discharges, to promote stormwater best practices, to undertake integrated water resource management, and to increase climate resiliency.
- Authorizes **\$1 billion** in grants for alternative water source projects, such as wastewater or stormwater reuse, to augment the existing water supplies.
- Provides **\$1 billion** for Clean Water Act grants to municipalities to implement treatment standards for PFAS and other emerging contaminants.
- Provides **\$2.5 billion** for wastewater infrastructure assistance to address the backlog of critical needs for Indian Tribes.





# THE WATER QUALITY PROTECTION AND JOB CREATION ACT OF 2021

## BACKGROUND: THE CLEAN WATER STATE REVOLVING FUND

### 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) recent *Infrastructure Report Card*, **America's wastewater treatment infrastructure receives a grade of D+.**

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 envisioned that a comprehensive national program was necessary to protect water quality. In 1972, 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 local communities to meet local water quality challenges.

For decades, Congress has provided Federal funds to municipalities to improve local water quality, including sewage treatment and stormwater needs. Initially, this assistance was provided as direct grants to municipalities (covering 50 to 75 percent of the total costs of the projects). However, in 1987, Congress converted the direct grant program to the Clean Water SRF authority that provides funding directly to States, which in-turn, provide below-market rate loans to communities to finance local wastewater infrastructure (typically required to be fully-repaid over 30 years).

Although the authorization of appropriations for the Clean Water SRF expired after 1994, Congress continues to fund this critical investment in our Nation's wastewater infrastructure—**providing just under \$50 billion in Federal capitalization assistance to States since 1987**. In turn, this infusion of Federal capital to State revolving funds has **leveraged more than \$140 billion in direct assistance** to communities over this period. However, it is important for Congress to renew its commitment to addressing the water-related infrastructure challenges facing communities, both large and small, as well as to provide communities with additional financial tools to affordably address local water quality challenges.

In addition, Congress has authorized two supplemental Clean Water Act grant programs to address sewer overflows and stormwater reuse (section 221 of the Clean Water Act), and to develop alternative sources of water, including reclaimed wastewater, in drought prone areas (section 220 of the Clean Water Act). In fiscal year 2020, Congress provided the first appropriations for the section 221 grant program, which will help address the affordability challenges facing many communities; however, additional resources for these critical programs are warranted and necessary.

#### **H.R. 1915 is supported by a diverse coalition of organizations, including:**

- American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC)
- American Sustainable Business Council
- Associated General Contractors of America (AGC)
- Ducks Unlimited
- Environment America
- Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA)
- League of Conservation Voters
- National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA)
- National League of Cities
- National Utility Contractors Association
- National Waterways Conference
- The Alliance for the Great Lakes
- Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP)
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- U.S. Conference of Mayors

