118TH CONGRESS
2D Session

H. R. _____

To authorize the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program, and
for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Sorensen introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on ____________________________

A BILL

To authorize the Low-Income Household Water Assistance
Program, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Low-Income House-
hold Water Assistance Program Establishment Act”.

SEC. 2. LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLD WATER ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:
(1) **ADMINISTRATOR.**—The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

(2) **ELIGIBLE ENTITY.**—The term “eligible entity” means a State, or Indian tribe, that is eligible to receive or previously received a grant under the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981 (42 U.S.C. 8621 et seq.).

(3) **HOUSEHOLD.**—The term “household” means any individual or group of individuals who are living together as 1 economic unit.

(4) **LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLD.**—The term “low-income household” means a household—

(A) in which 1 or more individuals are receiving—

(i) assistance under the State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.);

(ii) supplemental security income payments under title XVI of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1381 et seq.);

(iii) supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits under the Food and Nu-
trition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.);

(iv) payments under—

(I) section 1315, 1521, 1541, or 1542 of title 38, United States Code;

or

(II) section 306 of the Veterans’ and Survivors’ Pension Improvement Act of 1978 (38 U.S.C. 1521 note; Public Law 95–588); or

(v) assistance under the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981; or

(B) that has an income that, as determined by the State or Indian tribe, does not exceed the greatest of—

(i) an amount equal to 150 percent of the poverty level;

(ii) an amount equal to 60 percent of the State median income for that State or the State in which the Indian tribe is primarily located; and

(iii) an amount equal to 60 percent of the area median income for the area in which the household is located.
(5) Poverty level.—The term “poverty level” means the poverty line determined pursuant to section 673 of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902).

(6) Public water system.—The term “public water system” has the meaning given the term in section 1401 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300f).

(7) Qualified nonprofit organization.—The term “qualified nonprofit organization” includes a nonprofit organization described in section 680(a)(3)(B) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9921(a)(3)(B)).

(8) Secretary.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(9) State.—The term “State” means any of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the United States Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

(10) Treatment works.—The term “treatment works” has the meaning given the term in section 212 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1292).

(b) Establishment.—
(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation with the Administrator, shall establish the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program to award grants, in accordance with paragraph (2), to eligible entities to provide funds to owners and operators of public water systems or treatment works to assist low-income households in paying arrearages and other rates charged to such households for drinking water or wastewater services.

(2) FORMULA.—In awarding grants under this subsection to eligible entities, the Secretary shall—

(A) allot amounts made available for grants under this subsection to an eligible entity that is a State or Indian tribe based on—

(i) the percentage of households in the State, or under the jurisdiction of the Indian tribe, with income equal to or less than 150 percent of the poverty level; or

(ii) the percentage of households in the State, or under the jurisdiction of the Indian tribe, that spend more than 30 percent of monthly income on housing; and

(B) reserve up to 3 percent of amounts made available for grants under this subsection to eligible entities that are Indian tribes.
(c) RURAL, U N D E R S E R V E D, A N D I N D I A N T R I B E A C-
cess Grants.—The Secretary shall provide grants to qualified nonprofit organizations to assist owners or oper-
ators of public water systems or treatment works, in rural or underserved areas or in the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe, in accessing funds through the Low-Income House-
hold Water Assistance Program.

(d) A P P L I C AT I O N S . — E a c h eligible entity seeking a grant under subsection (b), and each qualified nonprofit organization seeking a grant under subsection (c), shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Sec-
retary shall require.

(e) L I M I T AT I O N S . — A recipient of a grant under sub-
section (b) or (c)—

(1) shall not use the funds from the grant to supplant any other funds for any program that as-
sists low-income households in maintaining access to affordable drinking water or wastewater services;
and

(2) may use the funds from the grant to supple-
ment or otherwise enhance any such program that satisfies the requirements under this section.

(f) T E C H N I C A L A S S I S T A N C E F O R E L I G I B I L I T Y R E-
quirements.—The Secretary shall provide technical as-
sistance to eligible entities receiving a grant under subsection (b) for such eligible entities to establish data sharing agreements to streamline categorical eligibility requirements for low-income households.

(g) TRANSFER TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—On the date on which the final report described in section 50109(d) of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (42 U.S.C. 300j–19a note; Public Law 117–58; 135 Stat. 1148) is submitted to Congress under such section, the Secretary, in coordination with the Administrator, shall transfer the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program established under this section to the Environmental Protection Agency for administration of such program by the Administrator in accordance with this section.

(2) ADMINISTRATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Beginning on the date described in paragraph (1)—

(i) the Administrator shall carry out all functions of the Secretary under this section; and

(ii) for purposes of administering the program established under this section,
each reference in subsection (b)(2), (c), (d), and (f) to the Secretary shall be deemed a reference to the Administrator.

(B) Grants previously awarded.— Notwithstanding paragraph (1) and subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall continue, after the transfer under paragraph (1), administering each grant awarded under this section prior to such transfer until the expiration of the term of such grant.

(3) Unobligated balances.—On the date described in paragraph (1) and subject to section 1531 of title 31, United States Code, the Secretary shall transfer all unobligated balances of appropriations, authorizations, allocations, or other funds available to the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program established under this section (except for any such balances related to grants awarded prior to the transfer under paragraph (1)) to the Administrator. The amounts of any such unobligated balances so transferred shall be used only for the purposes for which the amounts were originally authorized and appropriated.
(h) Authorization of Appropriations.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $1,100,000,000.