

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 13, 2026

The Honorable Andy Harris  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,  
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
2362-A Rayburn House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop Jr.  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,  
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
2362-A Rayburn House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Harris and Ranking Member Bishop,

We would like to thank the Members of the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee for their continued support of vital water infrastructure and technical assistance funding for small and rural communities through programs under the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). As the Subcommittee moves forward with the consideration of agriculture appropriations for FY2027, we write to respectfully request the following funding levels for these authorized programs:

- USDA Rural Water and Disposal Program Account: \$500,000,000
- USDA Circuit Rider Program: \$24,617,000
- Farm Service Agency Grassroots Source Water Protection Program: \$7,500,000

Small and rural communities have an important public responsibility of complying with all applicable federal Safe Drinking Water Act and Clean Water Act regulations in order to supply the public with safe drinking water and sanitation. Most U.S. water utilities are small; over 91 percent of the country's approximately 50,000 drinking water systems serve communities with fewer than 10,000 people and approximately 80 percent of the country's over 16,000 wastewater systems serve fewer than 10,000 people. Unfortunately, due to limited economies of scale and lack of technical expertise, small and rural communities often have difficulty complying with federal mandates. Collectively, the USDA Rural Water and Disposal Program, the USDA Circuit Rider program, and the FSA Grassroots Source Water Protection program are essential in helping small and rural communities overcome their limitations in providing safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation.

The USDA Rural Water and Disposal Program helps to construct water and wastewater infrastructure through grants and loans provided at reasonable rates and terms. Without this assistance, many communities would not have the means to construct new water systems, expand existing systems, or comply with federal mandates. Thus, we respectfully urge the Subcommittee to include at least \$500 million in the FY2027 appropriations for the USDA Rural Water and Disposal Program Account.

The USDA Circuit Rider program is a tremendously successful initiative that uses appropriated funds to provide necessary technical expertise and training to rural communities. This program provides the primary support for communities to operate safe and clean drinking water systems and helps to ensure compliance with current water regulations. Circuit riders are in the field every day helping these communities with water system compliance, operations, maintenance, management, and training. This assistance protects the federal government's sizable investment in rural water infrastructure. We respectfully request the USDA Circuit Rider

program be funded at a minimum of \$24,617,000 to maintain the number of full-time employees necessary to fulfill the important mission of this program.

The FSA Grassroots Source Water Protection Program provides our rural communities with the technical assistance necessary to improve water quality and provide safe drinking water. The source water program provides each state with one full-time staff member to coordinate and assist our rural communities in the implementation of source water protection plans. Without adequate funding for the FSA Grassroots Source Water Protection program, water quality in rural communities across the nation will be at risk. Thus, we respectfully request that the Subcommittee continue funding this program at \$7,500,000.

State rural water associations have continually utilized the resources provided under these programs to serve millions of Americans across the nation, including the U.S. territories. Failure to fund these programs at the requested levels will cause irreparable and long-lasting harm to community water systems throughout the U.S. and the Americans who rely upon them. We appreciate your consideration and your immediate attention to these most important initiatives.

Sincerely,



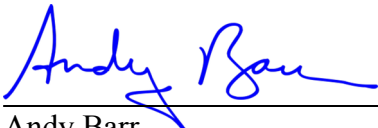
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Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress



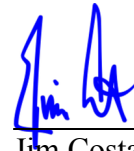
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Patrick Ryan  
Member of Congress



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Andy Barr  
Member of Congress




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Jim Costa  
Member of Congress



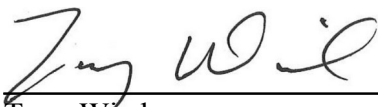
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Brad Finstad  
Member of Congress



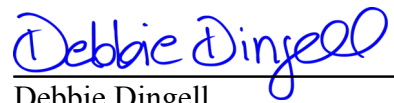
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Jeff Hurd  
Member of Congress



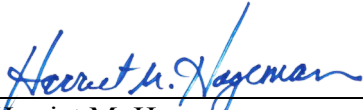
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Tony Wied  
Member of Congress



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Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress



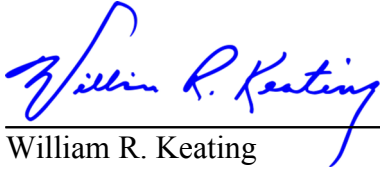
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Harriet M. Hageman  
Member of Congress



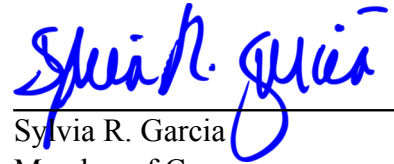
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Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Congress



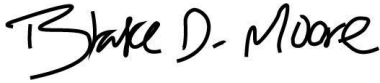
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William R. Keating  
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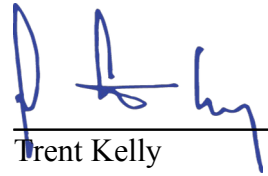
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Sylvia R. Garcia  
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Blake D. Moore  
Member of Congress




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Trent Kelly  
Member of Congress



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Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



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Robin L. Kelly  
Member of Congress



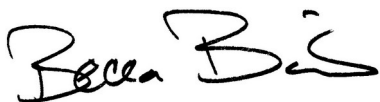
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Eric Sorensen  
Member of Congress



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Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress



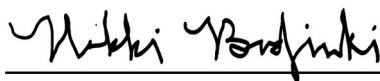
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Becca Balint  
Member of Congress



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Nathaniel Moran  
Member of Congress



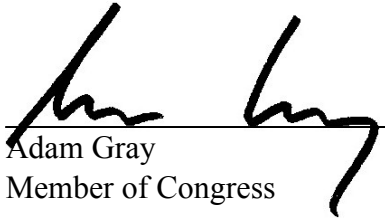
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Nikki Budzinski  
Member of Congress




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Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress


  
Adam Gray  
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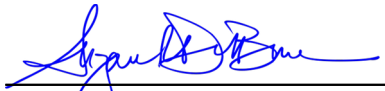
  
Mike Bost  
Member of Congress

  
Angie Craig  
Member of Congress

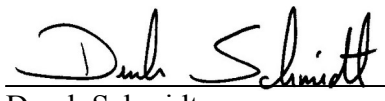
  
Kim Schrier, M.D.  
Member of Congress

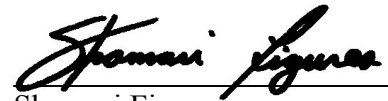
  
Rob Bresnahan, Jr.  
Member of Congress

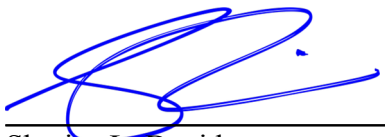
  
Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress

  
Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress

  
Mike Carey  
Member of Congress

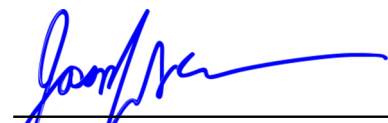
  
Derek Schmidt  
Member of Congress

  
Shomari Figures  
Member of Congress

  
Sharice L. Davids  
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Bill Foster  
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SETH MOULTON  
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Joe Neguse  
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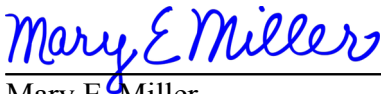
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James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



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Christopher H. Smith  
Member of Congress



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Mary E. Miller  
Member of Congress



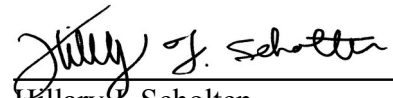
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Michelle Fischbach  
Member of Congress



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Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Hillary J. Scholten  
Member of Congress



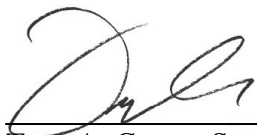
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Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



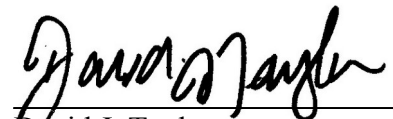
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Lance Gooden  
Member of Congress



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Troy A. Carter, Sr.  
Member of Congress



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David J. Taylor  
Member of Congress