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AL-07-000-2988

FOREIGN RELATIONS

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# United States Senate

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BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

February 13, 2007

The Honorable Stephen L. Johnson  
Administrator  
Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Johnson:

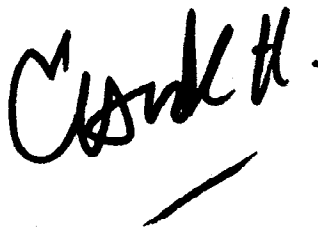
I write to request that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) use part of its Congressional appropriation for the remainder of FY07 to continue to fund technical assistance for rural water programs in small Nebraska communities.

I remain concerned that complying with EPA regulations places a costly burden on small communities in Nebraska. Many of these communities have traditionally received funding from EPA through the Nebraska Rural Water Association. The communities rely on this financial assistance to meet federal mandates.

It is a priority for me that EPA continue to provide funds to assist small communities attempting to comply with federal regulations. I will closely monitor this issue in the coming weeks.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MAR - 2 2007

OFFICE OF  
WATER

The Honorable Chuck Hagel  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hagel:

Thank you for your letter of February 13, 2007, to Stephen L. Johnson, Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), expressing your support for provision of funding to the National Rural Water Association (NRWA) from discretionary money that may be available to the Agency in the final Fiscal Year 2007 budget. I have been asked to respond to your letter on behalf of the Administrator. EPA agrees with you that it is critical to provide training and technical assistance to small drinking water systems to ensure that they are able to comply with standards under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

As you know, the NRWA receives financial assistance through Congressionally-directed funding in EPA's appropriations bills. EPA is reviewing the final appropriations language and will evaluate funding options in light of mandatory fixed costs and other priorities.

Irrespective of our final decision on funding for NRWA, I want to assure you that EPA will continue to support small systems through our other activities. The Agency supports training and develops targeted tools to help support small system implementation of regulatory requirements. States can also use funding from their Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) grants to support small systems. In addition to the \$14 million expended in FY 2006 for technical assistance to small systems, states also expended an additional \$38 million for other set-aside activities that primarily benefit small systems.

Again, thank you for your letter. If you have further questions, please contact me or your staff may call Steven Kinberg, in EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations, at (202) 564-5037.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "B H Grumbles".

Benjamin H. Grumbles  
Assistant Administrator