

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 16, 2007

The Honorable Stephen L. Johnson
EPA Administrator
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Johnson,

We are writing to urge you to continue FY 2007 funding under your agencies' Environmental Programs Management account for rural water associations' grassroots technical assistance initiatives currently operating throughout New York State.

As you are aware, H.J. Res. 20, which would fund all federal departments and agencies whose FY 2007 spending bills have not yet been enacted into law, does not include the Congressional report language that has provided a specific dollar amount for the National Rural Water Association for over two decades. Rural communities in New York State and throughout the country have come to rely on these funds to protect their drinking water sources and to comply with federal mandates.

Rural communities frequently lack adequate resources to understand and comply with the latest safe drinking water regulations and best water management practices. The New York Rural Water Association is often the only understandable assistance small communities receive to operate water supplies, comply with EPA rules, and apply for federal funding.

As you consider how to allocate the EPA funds provided for in the Joint Funding Resolution, we urge you to include funding for on-site technical assistance for rural water communities at a level that enables all the local field-staff to continue their important work in rural and small town New York.

I appreciate your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

Chuck Schumer

James J. Walsh

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Mary L. Landry

Vitell

Louise M. Slaughter

A. Hangel

J. H. Hoff

Gay L. Ackerman

William R. McHugh

B. Evans

Ernest L. Enge

John Ball

Randy Kuhl

Thomas M. Pugh

Michael DeWitt

John King

Brian Hogg

Carolyn McCowney

Kirsten E. Helbrand

[Signature]



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

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OFFICE OF
WATER

The Honorable Gary L. Ackerman
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Ackerman:

Thank you for your letter of February 16, 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, appearing to read "B. H. Grumbles".

Benjamin H. Grumbles
Assistant Administrator