To collect information regarding water access needs across the United States, to understand the impacts of the water access gap in each State and territory, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. Wyden (for himself, Mr. Merkley, and Mr. Luján) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To collect information regarding water access needs across the United States, to understand the impacts of the water access gap in each State and territory, and for other purposes.

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Access Data Collection Act of 2024” or the “WASH Access Data Collection Act”.

SEC. 2. WATER AND SANITATION NEEDS WORKING GROUP.

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

(2) **INDIAN TRIBE.**—The term “Indian Tribe” means any Indian or Alaska Native tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village, community, component band, or component reservation individually identified (including parenthetically) in the list published most recently as of the date of enactment of this Act pursuant to section 104 of the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994 (25 U.S.C. 5131).

(3) **STATE.**—The term “State” means—

(A) each of the 50 States;

(B) the District of Columbia; and

(C) any territory of the United States.

(4) **WORKING GROUP.**—The term “Working Group” means the Water and Sanitation Needs Working Group established under subsection (b).

(b) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—For the purposes of improving water access for the people of the United States facing water insecurity, preventing significant annual economic losses, and helping the Federal Government prioritize and plan water infrastructure plans more effectively, not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall establish a working group, to be
known as the “Water and Sanitation Needs Working Group”—

(1) to work with a Federal agency or independently to carry out a survey that will estimate the number and approximate geographic distribution of households in the United States that do not have access to drinking water infrastructure or a means for adequate wastewater treatment; and

(2) on the basis of the results of the survey carried out under paragraph (1), to prepare a report for Congress that estimates the cost of capital improvements that would be needed to ensure that all households in the United States have access to reliable drinking water and adequate sanitation, subject to the condition that the Working Group will not be required to collect or report personally identifiable information, but can maintain information with respect to drinking water and sanitation needs based on ZIP code or another appropriate geographic breakdown.

(c) CHAIRPERSON; MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) CHAIRPERSON.—The Administrator shall serve as the chairperson of the Working Group.

(2) MEMBERSHIP.—The Working Group shall comprise senior representatives from such Federal
agencies as the Administrator determines to be appropriate, including—

(A) the Department of the Interior, including the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Bureau of Reclamation;

(B) the Department of Agriculture;

(C) the Census Bureau;

(D) the Department of Health and Human Services, including the Indian Health Service; and

(E) the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

(d) Duties.—The Working Group shall—

(1) leverage the expertise of industry, the research community, nongovernmental organizations, and utilities, including through the incorporation of information that could be collected by utilities, circuit riders, and technical assistance providers;

(2) consult, on a regular basis, with States, units of local government, Indian Tribes, and relevant Federal agencies not included in the membership of the Working Group;

(3) in carrying out subsection (b)—

(A) seek to determine whether the decennial census or another existing survey or data
collection effort carried out by the Federal Government presents an efficient opportunity for collecting the information described in paragraph (1) of that subsection;

(B) seek to coordinate Federal programs and policies to support the collection and use of the information described in that subsection;

(C) develop a methodology for creating the cost estimate required under paragraph (2) of that subsection; and

(D) oversee the collection of—

(i) the information described in paragraph (1) of that subsection; and

(ii) the information necessary to create the cost estimate required under paragraph (2) of that subsection; and

(4) establish a national, public index for publishing and linking water access data from Federal sources and State, Tribal, and other non-Federal sources that will be accessible online.

(e) **Report on Water and Sanitation Needs.**—Not less frequently than once every 5 years, the Administrator shall submit to Congress a report that describes the activities and findings of the Working Group, including—
(1) an explanation of the methodology used by the Working Group to determine drinking water and sanitation needs;
(2) an estimate of the amount of funds necessary to provide all households with access to reliable drinking water and adequate sanitation; and
(3) a breakdown by State and, if feasible, congressional district of—
(A) drinking water and sanitation needs;
and
(B) the amount of funding required to address those needs.
(f) Authorization of Appropriations.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Administrator and other necessary Federal agencies to collect the information and prepare the reports required under this section—
(1) for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2029, $10,000,000; and
(2) for fiscal year 2030 and each fiscal year thereafter, such sums as may be necessary.