

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

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.

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

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

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

7 **SEC. 2. WATER AND SANITATION NEEDS WORKING GROUP.**

8 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1 (1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-
2 trator” means the Administrator of the Environ-
3 mental Protection Agency.

4 (2) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian Tribe”
5 means any Indian or Alaska Native tribe, band, na-
6 tion, pueblo, village, community, component band, or
7 component reservation individually identified (includ-
8 ing parenthetically) in the list published most re-
9 cently as of the date of enactment of this Act pursu-
10 ant to section 104 of the Federally Recognized In-
11 dian Tribe List Act of 1994 (25 U.S.C. 5131).

12 (3) STATE.—The term “State” means—

13 (A) each of the 50 States;

14 (B) the District of Columbia; and

15 (C) any territory of the United States.

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

19 (b) ESTABLISHMENT.—For the purposes of improv-
20 ing water access for the people of the United States facing
21 water insecurity, preventing significant annual economic
22 losses, and helping the Federal Government prioritize and
23 plan water infrastructure plans more effectively, not later
24 than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act,
25 the Administrator shall establish a working group, to be

1 known as the “Water and Sanitation Needs Working
2 Group”—

3 (1) to work with a Federal agency or independ-
4 ently to carry out a survey that will estimate the
5 number and approximate geographic distribution of
6 households in the United States that do not have ac-
7 cess to drinking water infrastructure or a means for
8 adequate wastewater treatment; and

9 (2) on the basis of the results of the survey car-
10 ried out under paragraph (1), to prepare a report
11 for Congress that estimates the cost of capital im-
12 provements that would be needed to ensure that all
13 households in the United States have access to reli-
14 able drinking water and adequate sanitation, subject
15 to the condition that the Working Group will not be
16 required to collect or report personally identifiable
17 information, but can maintain information with re-
18 spect to drinking water and sanitation needs based
19 on ZIP code or another appropriate geographic
20 breakdown.

21 (c) CHAIRPERSON; MEMBERSHIP.—

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

24 (2) MEMBERSHIP.—The Working Group shall
25 comprise senior representatives from such Federal

1 agencies as the Administrator determines to be ap-
2 propriate, including—

3 (A) the Department of the Interior, includ-
4 ing the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Bu-
5 reau of Reclamation;

6 (B) the Department of Agriculture;

7 (C) the Census Bureau;

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

11 (E) the Department of Housing and Urban
12 Development.

13 (d) DUTIES.—The Working Group shall—

14 (1) leverage the expertise of industry, the re-
15 search community, nongovernmental organizations,
16 and utilities, including through the incorporation of
17 information that could be collected by utilities, cir-
18 cuit riders, and technical assistance providers;

19 (2) consult, on a regular basis, with States,
20 units of local government, Indian Tribes, and rel-
21 evant Federal agencies not included in the member-
22 ship of the Working Group;

23 (3) in carrying out subsection (b)—

24 (A) seek to determine whether the decen-
25 nial census or another existing survey or data

1 collection effort carried out by the Federal Gov-
2 ernment presents an efficient opportunity for
3 collecting the information described in para-
4 graph (1) of that subsection;

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

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

11 (D) oversee the collection of—

12 (i) the information described in para-
13 graph (1) of that subsection; and

14 (ii) the information necessary to cre-
15 ate the cost estimate required under para-
16 graph (2) of that subsection; and

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

21 (e) REPORT ON WATER AND SANITATION NEEDS.—

22 Not less frequently than once every 5 years, the Adminis-
23 trator shall submit to Congress a report that describes the
24 activities and findings of the Working Group, including—

1 (1) an explanation of the methodology used by
2 the Working Group to determine drinking water and
3 sanitation needs;

4 (2) an estimate of the amount of funds nec-
5 essary to provide all households with access to reli-
6 able drinking water and adequate sanitation; and

7 (3) a breakdown by State and, if feasible, con-
8 gressional district of—

9 (A) drinking water and sanitation needs;

10 and

11 (B) the amount of funding required to ad-
12 dress those needs.

13 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
14 are authorized to be appropriated to the Administrator
15 and other necessary Federal agencies to collect the infor-
16 mation and prepare the reports required under this sec-
17 tion—

18 (1) for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2029,
19 \$10,000,000; and

20 (2) for fiscal year 2030 and each fiscal year
21 thereafter, such sums as may be necessary.