

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 28, 2007

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

Dear Administrator Johnson:

We write to urge you to continue fiscal year (FY) 2007 funding for the rural water associations' grassroots technical assistance currently operating across the country.

As you know, the Joint Funding Resolution, HJRES 20, did not identify any earmarks, including the Rural Water Training and Technical Assistance and Groundwater Protection, an authorized initiative that has been operating for 20 years.


Small and rural communities face significant challenges in protecting the quality of their drinking water and complying with federal mandates. Many lack the financial resources and technical expertise to ensure compliance with the Safe Drinking Water and Clean Water Acts. As a result, these communities rely on the services of rural water field-staff funded under this initiative to provide technical assistance and guidance in the operation of their systems. With the expansion of federal water regulations addressing arsenic, radon, operation certification requirements and many others, rural water assistance is essential in making sure communities can afford and understand how to achieve compliance.

As you consider your agency's funding under the FY07 Joint Funding Resolution, we urge you to prioritize funding for this important rural water initiative to allow all local field-staff to continue their efforts to assist small and rural communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



KENT CONRAD



CHRISTOPHER BOND



PATRICK LEAHY



BERNARD SANDERS