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## **NRWA Applauds Congress' Funding Increase for Rural Water Infrastructure**

The National Rural Water Association (NRWA) commends the House and Senate Appropriations Committees for providing increases in federal water infrastructure funding for Rural America.

“This is a very significant action from Congress with increased attention and investments to address the unmet water infrastructure needs in Rural America,” stated Sam Wade, CEO of NRWA.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 (HR 1625) included \$560,263,000 for USDA's Rural Utilities Service Water and Waste Disposal Program Account, and, to further enhance rural water infrastructure, the appropriators included an additional \$500,000,000 for direct rural water and waste disposal loans and grants to remain available until expended. This federal program is the only water infrastructure account specifically targeted to rural populations.

Congress also provided USDA the flexibility to use this funding to increase the direct loan level to support billions in loan authority. These low-interest loans are coupled with a 40-year term to make water rates affordable for low-income residents and communities.

There are approximately 52,000 community water supplies in the United States, and 92% serve populations of 10,000 or less. The NRWA and its 49 state association affiliates provide compliance training and technical assistance to approximately 100,000 rural and small system personnel annually to address the numerous federally-mandated drinking and clean water rules and regulations.

America enjoys the safest water supply in the world due to the small water and waste water system personnel that work every minute of every day to protect and maintain the integrity of the nation's most important resource.

“Communities that have been waiting for available affordable resources to address deferred upgrades or enhancements will now be able to move forward,” stated Wade.

NRWA looks forward to working in close consultation with USDA and other industry partners to make wise use of these additional funds and address Rural America's water infrastructure needs.

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The National Rural Water Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to training, supporting, and promoting the water and wastewater professionals that serve small communities across the United States. The mission of NRWA is to strengthen State Associations.

NRWA provides training and technical assistance through 49 affiliated State Rural Water Associations, that currently have over 31,000 utility system members. Last year, State Rural Water Association staff delivered over 75,000 on-site technical assistance visits and 150,000 hours of training to more than 37,000 utilities. Rural Water training and technical assistance covers every aspect of operating, managing and financing water and wastewater utilities.