



# Rural Community Assistance Partnership

*"Improving the quality of life in rural communities"*



## FY 2010 Legislative Priorities

### Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations

Request: \$10 million and bill language for Rural Facilities under section 680(3)(B) of the Community Services Block Grant Act, to provide technical assistance to low-income rural communities with construction and expansion of water and wastewater systems. This is not an earmark. Section 680(3)(B) is an authorized program and the RCAP regions compete for the funds.

Bill Language: *"Provided further, that not less than \$10,000,000 shall be for section 680(3)(B) of the Community Services Block Grant Act..."*

### Agriculture-RD Appropriations

Request #1: \$7 million and bill language in the Rural Utility Service account to improve the operation and management of small water and wastewater systems. The FY 09 appropriation is approx. \$5.6 million.

Bill Language: *"...of which \$7,000,000 shall be made available for a grant to a qualified non-profit multi-state regional technical assistance organization with experience in working with small communities on water and waste water problems, the principal purpose of such grant shall be to assist rural communities with populations of 3,300 or less in improving the planning, financing, development, operation, and management of water and waste water systems ..."*

Request #2: \$3 million in the Rural Utility Service account for the Revolving Fund Program to finance small water and waste disposal projects.

### Interior & Environment Appropriations

Request: \$4 million within the EPA Environmental Programs and Management account for technical and regulatory compliance assistance to small and very small communities, to be equally divided between assistance activities related to drinking water and clean water. The FY 09 earmark is approx. \$2.45 million.

### Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds Reauthorization

Request: Support reauthorization of the Clean Water and Drinking Water SRF Programs. Support provisions benefitting small and rural systems:

- Mandate a minimum 15% set-aside for disadvantaged systems (small, low MHI, and/or noncompliant)
- Establish a grant program to assist disadvantaged systems
- Authorize states to provide additional subsidization assistance to disadvantaged systems
- Authorize a technical assistance set-aside for small systems of at least \$25 million annually, each
- Establish a small system revolving loan fund for pre-development costs and small projects, to be administered by a nationwide nonprofit organization with lending experience
- Simplify initial application requirements for small communities
- Require states to conform application materials/processes to other infrastructure funding sources
- Require that small systems evaluate consolidation/regionalization options
- Restrict eligibility to existing publicly-owned or private nonprofit systems, while allowing formation of systems to address compliance issues, but exclude growth and sprawl
- Mandate watershed-based, integrated water resource management

### Water Trust Fund Authorization

Request: Support authorization of a dedicated, off-budget source of water and wastewater infrastructure financing that supplements existing state and local funding and provides at least \$10 billion annually.

*The RCAP network provides technical assistance and training to small, rural water and wastewater systems throughout the U.S. and its territories. We help communities maintain compliance with SDWA and CWA regulations; protect public health and the environment; develop, operate, and maintain sustainable systems; and build local leadership capacity.*