



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

## **Water Trust Fund Legislation Priorities**

### **About RCAP**

The RCAP network provides technical assistance and training to more than 2,000 small, rural water and wastewater systems each year 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; support economic development; and build local leadership capacity.

### **Background**

More than a million rural Americans still live without water and/or wastewater facilities, and another five million are served by systems inadequate to meet their needs.

Much of the existing water and wastewater infrastructure in the U.S. is at, or near, the end of its useful life. As a nation, we are under-funding infrastructure by an estimated \$20 billion annually, placing public health and the environment at risk.

Small systems comprise most of the public water and wastewater systems and the bulk of SDWA and CWA violations. They experience diseconomies of scale that result in higher user rates, per capita construction costs, and staff turnover than large systems. Small systems are often operated by part-time, insufficiently-trained staff and overseen by inexperienced boards. They need training and technical assistance to operate efficiently and effectively, and to access funding when facilities must be upgraded.

### **Priorities**

- Provide permanent, stable, off-budget revenue of at least \$10 billion annually.
- Establish DW and CW technical assistance programs for small systems (under 3,300 users), to be provided by nationwide nonprofit organizations. Authorize each at a minimum of \$25 million annually.
- Establish at least a 15% loan funding set-aside for small, disadvantaged systems (low MHI and/or non-compliant).
- Establish a small, disadvantaged systems grant program.
- Establish a small system revolving loan fund for pre-development costs and small projects, to be administered by a nationwide nonprofit organization.