

The Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Sector Development Act of 2022

More than 2 million Americans currently live without running water and basic indoor plumbing, and many more without modern sanitation. Access to reliable, safe drinking water and sanitation remains out of reach for some of the most underserved communities in the United States, including people of color, lower-income families in rural areas, and tribal communities. Communities that did not benefit from past federal investments in water and sanitation infrastructure have a hard time catching up, and some communities even report that they are losing access to services they once had.

Closing the water access gap in the United States is difficult, but has never been more pressing because of the climate crisis and unprecedented drought facing Western states. Currently, federal data fails to accurately measure the water access gap in America, resulting in insufficient financial assistance and infrastructure investment in sanitation and clean drinking water for underserved communities nationwide. The Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Sector (WASH) Development Act would tackle this problem head on by improving data and expanding access to clean drinking water.

The WASH Sector Development Act of 2022:

- Establishes a Water and Sanitation Needs Working Group to more accurately survey and report households in the United States that do not have complete access to clean drinking water and sanitation services.
- Requires a report by EPA on the cost estimate for capital improvements needed to ensure that all households in the U.S. have access to reliable drinking water and adequate sanitation, with cost estimates aggregated by Congressional district.
- Establishes a pilot grant program designed to expand options for decentralized drinking water infrastructure and empower local partner organizations to support communities. This grant program is modeled after the grant program for decentralized wastewater systems authorized under section 50208 of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Together, the two programs would enable deployment of decentralized mid-sized solutions for low-income individuals and communities to provide *both* drinking water and wastewater infrastructure.