

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 702

To require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Secretary of Agriculture to maintain the Urban Waters Federal Partnership Program, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 8, 2023

Ms. SINEMA (for herself, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. KELLY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works

A BILL

To require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Secretary of Agriculture to maintain the Urban Waters Federal Partnership Program, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Urban Waters Federal
5 Partnership Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

1 (1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-
2 trator” means the Administrator of the Environ-
3 mental Protection Agency.

4 (2) MEMBER AGENCIES.—The term “member
5 agencies” means each of—

6 (A) the Environmental Protection Agency;

7 (B) the Department of the Interior;

8 (C) the Department of Agriculture;

9 (D) the Corps of Engineers;

10 (E) the National Oceanic and Atmospheric
11 Administration;

12 (F) the Economic Development Adminis-
13 tration;

14 (G) the Department of Housing and Urban
15 Development;

16 (H) the Department of Transportation;

17 (I) the Department of Energy;

18 (J) the Department of Education;

19 (K) the National Institute for Environ-
20 mental Health Sciences;

21 (L) the Community Development Financial
22 Institutions Fund;

23 (M) the Federal Emergency Management
24 Agency;

1 (N) the Corporation for National and
2 Community Service; and

3 (O) such other agencies, departments, and
4 bureaus that elect to participate in the Urban
5 Waters program as the missions, authorities,
6 and appropriated funding of those agencies, de-
7 partments, and bureaus allow.

8 (3) SECRETARIES.—The term “Secretaries”
9 means the Secretary of the Interior and the Sec-
10 retary of Agriculture.

11 (4) URBAN WATERS AMBASSADOR.—The term
12 “Urban Waters ambassador” means a person who—

13 (A) is locally based near the applicable
14 Urban Waters partnership location; and

15 (B) serves in a central coordinating role
16 for the work carried out in the applicable
17 Urban Waters partnership location with respect
18 to the Urban Waters program.

19 (5) URBAN WATERS NONPARTNERSHIP LOCA-
20 TION.—The term “Urban Waters nonpartnership lo-
21 cation” means an urban or municipal site and the
22 associated watershed or waterbody of the site—

23 (A) that receives Federal support for ac-
24 tivities that advance the purpose of the Urban
25 Waters program; but

1 (B)(i) that is not formally designated as an
 2 Urban Waters partnership location; and

3 (ii) for which is not maintained—

4 (I) an active partnership with an
 5 Urban Waters ambassador; or

6 (II) an Urban Waters partnership lo-
 7 cation workplan.

8 (6) URBAN WATERS PARTNERSHIP LOCATION.—

9 The term “Urban Waters partnership location”
 10 means an urban or municipal site and the associated
 11 watershed or waterbody of the site for which—

12 (A) the Administrator, in collaboration
 13 with the heads of the other member agencies,
 14 has formally designated as a partnership loca-
 15 tion under the Urban Waters program; and

16 (B) an active partnership with an Urban
 17 Waters ambassador is maintained.

18 (7) URBAN WATERS PARTNERSHIP LOCATION

19 WORKPLAN.—The term “Urban Waters partnership
 20 location workplan” means the plan for projects and
 21 actions that is coordinated across an Urban Waters
 22 partnership location.

23 (8) URBAN WATERS PROGRAM.—The term
 24 “Urban Waters program” means the program estab-
 25 lished under section 3(a).

1 **SEC. 3. URBAN WATERS FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP PRO-**
2 **GRAM.**

3 (a) AUTHORIZATION.—There is authorized a pro-
4 gram, to be known as the “Urban Waters Federal Part-
5 nership Program”, administered by the partnership of the
6 member agencies—

7 (1) to jointly support and execute the goals of
8 the Urban Waters program through the independent
9 authorities and appropriated funding of the member
10 agencies; and

11 (2) to advance the purpose described in sub-
12 section (b) within designated Urban Waters partner-
13 ship locations and other urban and suburban com-
14 munities in the United States.

15 (b) PROGRAM PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Urban
16 Waters program is to reconnect urban communities, par-
17 ticularly urban communities that are overburdened or eco-
18 nomically distressed, with associated waterways by im-
19 proving coordination among Federal agencies.

20 (c) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the availability of
22 appropriations, the Administrator, in coordination
23 with the Secretaries and, as appropriate, the heads
24 of the other member agencies, shall maintain the
25 Urban Waters program in accordance with this sub-
26 section.

1 (2) URBAN WATERS FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP
2 STEERING COMMITTEE.—

3 (A) ESTABLISHMENT.—

4 (i) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator
5 shall establish a steering committee for the
6 Urban Waters program (referred to in this
7 paragraph as the “steering committee”).

8 (ii) CHAIR.—The Administrator shall
9 serve as chairperson of the steering com-
10 mittee.

11 (iii) VICE CHAIRS.—The Secretaries
12 shall serve as vice chairpersons of the
13 steering committee.

14 (iv) MEMBERSHIP.—In addition to the
15 Administrator and the Secretaries, the
16 members of the steering committee shall be
17 the senior officials (or their designees)
18 from such member agencies as the Admin-
19 istrator shall designate.

20 (B) DUTIES.—The steering committee
21 shall provide general guidance to the member
22 agencies with respect to the Urban Waters pro-
23 gram, including guidance with respect to—

1 (i) the identification of annual priority
 2 issues for special emphasis within Urban
 3 Waters partnership locations; and

4 (ii) the identification of funding op-
 5 portunities, which shall be communicated
 6 to all Urban Waters partnership locations.

7 (C) INTERAGENCY FINANCING.—Notwith-
 8 standing section 1346 of title 31, United States
 9 Code, section 708 of division E of the Consoli-
 10 dated Appropriations Act, 2023 (Public Law
 11 117–328), or any other similar provision of law,
 12 member agencies may—

13 (i) provide interagency financing to
 14 the steering committee; and

15 (ii) directly transfer such amounts as
 16 are necessary to support the activities of
 17 the steering committee.

18 (3) AUTHORITY.—

19 (A) PARTNERSHIP LOCATIONS.—

20 (i) PARTNERSHIP LOCATIONS.—The
 21 Administrator and the Secretaries shall
 22 maintain an active partnership program
 23 under the Urban Waters program at each
 24 Urban Waters partnership location, includ-
 25 ing each Urban Waters partnership loca-

tion in existence on the date of enactment
of this Act, by providing—

(I) technical assistance for
projects to be carried out within the
Urban Waters partnership location;

(II) funding for projects to be
carried out within the Urban Waters
partnership location;

(III) funding for an Urban
Waters ambassador for the Urban
Waters partnership location; and

(IV) coordination support with
other member agencies with respect to
activities carried out at the Urban
Waters partnership location.

(ii) NEW PARTNERSHIP LOCATIONS.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—The Adminis-
trator and the Secretaries may, in
consultation with the heads of other
member agencies, establish new
Urban Waters partnership locations.

(II) NONPARTNERSHIP LOCA-
TIONS.—A community with an Urban
Waters nonpartnership location may,
at the discretion of the community,

1 seek to have the Urban Waters non-
 2 partnership location designated as an
 3 Urban Waters partnership location.

4 (B) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—

5 (i) DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE ENTI-
 6 TY.—In this subparagraph, the term “eli-
 7 gible entity” means—

8 (I) a State;

9 (II) a territory or possession of
 10 the United States;

11 (III) the District of Columbia;

12 (IV) an Indian Tribe;

13 (V) a unit of local government;

14 (VI) a public or private institu-
 15 tion of higher education;

16 (VII) a public or private non-
 17 profit institution;

18 (VIII) an intertribal consortium;

19 (IX) an interstate agency; and

20 (X) any other entity determined
 21 to be appropriate by the Adminis-
 22 trator.

23 (ii) ACTIVITIES.—In carrying out the
 24 Urban Waters program, a member agency
 25 may—

1 (I) encourage, cooperate with,
2 and render technical services to and
3 provide financial assistance to sup-
4 port—

5 (aa) Urban Waters ambas-
6 sadors to conduct activities with
7 respect to the applicable Urban
8 Waters partnership location, in-
9 cluding—

10 (AA) convening the ap-
11 propriate Federal and non-
12 Federal partners for the
13 Urban Waters partnership
14 location;

15 (BB) developing and
16 carrying out an Urban
17 Waters partnership location
18 workplan;

19 (CC) leveraging avail-
20 able Federal and non-Fed-
21 eral resources for projects
22 within the Urban Waters
23 partnership location; and

24 (DD) sharing informa-
25 tion and best practices with

1 the Urban Waters Learning
2 Network established under
3 subparagraph (C); and

4 (bb) an eligible entity in car-
5 rying out—

6 (AA) projects at Urban
7 Waters partnership locations
8 that provide habitat or
9 water quality improvements,
10 increase river recreation, en-
11 hance community resiliency,
12 install infrastructure,
13 strengthen community en-
14 gagement with and edu-
15 cation with respect to water
16 resources, or support plan-
17 ning, coordination, and exe-
18 cution of projects identified
19 in the applicable Urban
20 Waters partnership location
21 workplan; and

22 (BB) planning, re-
23 search, experiments, dem-
24 onstrations, surveys, studies,
25 monitoring, training, and

1 outreach to advance the pur-
 2 pose described in subsection
 3 (b) within Urban Waters
 4 partnership locations and in
 5 Urban Waters nonpartner-
 6 ship locations; and

7 (II) transfer funds to or enter
 8 into interagency agreements with
 9 other member agencies as necessary
 10 to carry out the Urban Waters pro-
 11 gram.

12 (C) URBAN WATERS LEARNING NET-
 13 WORK.—The Administrator and the Secretaries
 14 shall maintain an Urban Waters Learning Net-
 15 work—

16 (i) to share information, resources,
 17 and tools between Urban Waters partner-
 18 ship locations and with other interested
 19 communities; and

20 (ii) to carry out community-based ca-
 21 pacity building that advances the goals of
 22 the Urban Waters program.

23 (D) WORKPLAN PROGRESS.—Progress in
 24 addressing the goals of the Urban Waters part-
 25 nership location workplan of an Urban Waters

1 partnership location shall be shared with the
2 Urban Waters program at regular intervals, as
3 determined by the Administrator and the Secre-
4 taries.

5 (d) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—The Administrator
6 and the Secretaries shall annually submit to the appro-
7 priate committees of Congress a report describing the
8 progress in carrying out the Urban Waters program,
9 which shall include—

10 (1) a description of the use of funds under the
11 Urban Waters program;

12 (2) a description of the progress made in car-
13 rying out Urban Waters partnership location
14 workplans; and

15 (3) any additional information that the Admin-
16 istrator and the Secretaries determine to be appro-
17 priate.

18 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be
20 appropriated to the Administrator to carry out the
21 Urban Waters program \$10,000,000 for each of fis-
22 cal years 2024 through 2028.

23 (2) USE OF FUNDS.—Notwithstanding any
24 other provision of law, activities carried out using
25 amounts made available to the Administrator under

1 paragraph (1) may be used in conjunction with
2 amounts made available from—

3 (A) other member agencies; and

4 (B) non-Federal entities that participate in
5 the Urban Waters program.

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