

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3292

To require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to carry out a residential emergency relief program to provide payment assistance for households to retain water service, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 18, 2021

Mrs. DINGELL (for herself, Ms. TLAIB, and Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to carry out a residential emergency relief program to provide payment assistance for households to retain water service, 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 “Water Debt Relief Act
5 of 2021”.

1 **SEC. 2. EMERGENCY RELIEF PROGRAM.**

2 Part F of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C.
3 300j–21 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
4 lowing new section:

5 **“SEC. 1466. EMERGENCY RELIEF PROGRAM.**

6 “(a) EMERGENCY RELIEF PROGRAM.—The Adminis-
7 trator shall establish and carry out a residential emer-
8 gency relief program to provide payments to public water
9 systems to reimburse such public water systems for pro-
10 viding forgiveness of arrearages and fees incurred by eligi-
11 ble residential customers before the date of enactment of
12 this section to help such eligible residential customers re-
13 tain water service.

14 “(b) CONDITIONS.—To receive funds under this sec-
15 tion, a public water system shall agree to—

16 “(1) except as provided in paragraph (2), use
17 such funds to forgive all arrearages and fees relating
18 to nonpayment or arrearages incurred by eligible
19 residential customers before the date of enactment
20 of this section;

21 “(2) if forgiveness of all arrearages and fees de-
22 scribed in paragraph (1) is not possible given the
23 amount of funds received, use such funds to reduce
24 such arrearages and fees for each eligible residential
25 customer by, to the extent practicable, a consistent
26 percentage;

1 “(3) take no action that negatively affects the
2 credit score of an eligible residential customer, or
3 pursue any type of collection action against such eli-
4 gible residential customer, during the 5-year period
5 that begins on the date on which the public water
6 system receives such funds; and

7 “(4) not disconnect or interrupt the service of
8 any eligible residential customer as a result of non-
9 payment or arrearages during such 5-year period.

10 “(c) ELIGIBLE CUSTOMERS.—To be eligible for for-
11 giveness or reduction of arrearages and fees pursuant to
12 the program established under subsection (a), a residential
13 customer of a public water system shall have accrued new
14 arrearages on or after March 1, 2020.

15 “(d) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—The Adminis-
16 trator may authorize—

17 “(1) States to implement the program estab-
18 lished under subsection (a); and

19 “(2) a State implementing such program to use
20 up to 4 percent of funds made available to carry out
21 such program in such State for administrative ex-
22 penses.

1 “(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
2 is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
3 \$4,000,000,000, to remain available until expended.”.

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