

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To establish a rural area digital infrastructure technology grant program,
and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself and Mr. KELLY) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To establish a rural area digital infrastructure technology
grant 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 “Futureproofing Local
5 Operations for Water Systems Act of 2026” or the
6 “FLOWS Act of 2026”.

7 **SEC. 2. RURAL AREA DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE TECH-**
8 **NOLOGY GRANT PROGRAM.**

9 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

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

4 (2) DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE TECHNOLOGY.—
5 The term “digital infrastructure technology” means
6 information technology or operational technology
7 that utilizes—

8 (A) remote sensing, flow or pressure moni-
9 toring, real-time monitoring, management, ana-
10 lytics, data, or acoustic data collection tools and
11 technologies that may detect or reduce water
12 loss, identify damaged or nonfunctioning infra-
13 structure, or improve the efficiency of the oper-
14 ations and asset condition assessment of a pub-
15 lic water system or treatment works;

16 (B) industrial control systems, including
17 supervisory control and data acquisition tech-
18 nology;

19 (C) artificial or embedded intelligence, or
20 other intelligent optimization tools; and

21 (D) hydraulic analysis, digital design soft-
22 ware, and advanced digital design and construc-
23 tion management tools or software that may aid
24 in the development of digital models and engi-
25 neering plans.

1 (3) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
2 ty” means—

3 (A) the owner or operator of a publicly
4 owned public water system or treatment works
5 that serves a rural area;

6 (B) a rural area; and

7 (C) a State or Tribe, on behalf of an entity
8 described in subparagraph (A) or (B).

9 (4) PROGRAM.—The term “program” means
10 the grant program established under subsection
11 (b)(1).

12 (5) PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM.—The term “public
13 water system” has the meaning given the term in
14 section 1401 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42
15 U.S.C. 300f).

16 (6) RURAL AREA.—The term “rural area” has
17 the meaning given the term in section 609(a) of the
18 Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 (7
19 U.S.C. 918c(a)).

20 (7) TREATMENT WORKS.—The term “treatment
21 works” has the meaning given the term in section
22 212 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33
23 U.S.C. 1292).

24 (b) GRANT PROGRAM.—

1 (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Administrator shall
2 establish a grant program to provide infrastructure
3 assistance to eligible entities in accordance with this
4 subsection.

5 (2) FORM OF GRANTS.—

6 (A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subpara-
7 graph (B), the Administrator may award a
8 grant under the program to assist an eligible
9 entity in—

10 (i) designing, constructing, operating,
11 and maintaining digital infrastructure
12 technology for water infrastructure, source
13 water protection, and water development
14 projects in rural areas, including for—

15 (I) facilities that supply, collect,
16 and treat water, including drinking
17 water, wastewater, and stormwater,
18 including through desalination and
19 water reuse;

20 (II) water distribution or waste-
21 water conveyance systems; and

22 (III) the protection or develop-
23 ment of surface water or groundwater
24 resources, including through banking
25 or recharging of aquifers;

1 (ii) providing training and workforce
2 development activities to help project and
3 construction managers and owners and op-
4 erators of drinking water, wastewater, and
5 stormwater utilities manage water infra-
6 structure projects using digital infrastruc-
7 ture technology; and

8 (iii) mitigating risks and employing
9 countermeasures to reduce the
10 vulnerabilities of digital infrastructure
11 technology for water infrastructure from
12 cyber-attacks through on-site cybersecurity
13 training and technical assistance.

14 (B) ACQUISITION AND MAINTENANCE OF
15 SOFTWARE.—With respect to digital infrastruc-
16 ture technology that is software and notwith-
17 standing any other provision of law, including
18 the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300f),
19 the recipient of a grant under the program may
20 use grant funds for the initial acquisition and
21 ongoing maintenance costs of that software.

22 (3) PRIORITIZATION.—In selecting recipients of
23 grants under the program, the Administrator shall
24 give priority to eligible entities that—

1 (A) own or operate public water systems or
2 treatment works that serve fewer than 3,300
3 people; and

4 (B) serve people or comprise people that,
5 as determined by the Administrator, are most
6 in need, such as—

7 (i) pre-fabricated home community or-
8 ganizations or associations that are con-
9 trolled by a local public body; and

10 (ii) other organizations that—

11 (I) own or operate a public water
12 system or treatment works; and

13 (II) are owned or controlled by
14 members of the community served by
15 the public water system or treatment
16 works, as opposed to investor-owned.

17 (4) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

18 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Ad-
19 ministrator to carry out the program \$50,000,000
20 for each of fiscal years 2027 through 2031, to re-
21 main available until expended.

22 (c) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER FEDERAL AND STATE
23 LAWS.—Nothing in this Act waives, limits, or otherwise
24 affects the applicability of any provision of Federal or

1 State law that would apply to a project to be carried out
2 with grants provided under the program.

3 (d) DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION STUDY.—Not later
4 than 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the
5 Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct
6 a study to determine the impact of adopting digital infra-
7 structure technology in water infrastructure projects in
8 rural areas, including—

9 (1) identification of—

10 (A) water loss and inadequate fire flow ca-
11 pacity in public water systems that serve rural
12 areas;

13 (B) potential bottlenecks in combined
14 sewer systems that serve rural areas that could
15 prevent an overflow in a wastewater infrastruc-
16 ture system caused by extreme precipitation or
17 excess runoff; and

18 (C) models and simulations that are effec-
19 tive in assessing the challenges of water re-
20 source management in rural areas; and

21 (2) recommendations for—

22 (A) developing water resource management
23 plans to accommodate population growth in
24 rural areas;

1 (B) prioritizing areas for improvement of
2 the infrastructure and operations of public
3 water systems and treatment works in rural
4 areas;

5 (C) maximizing interoperability of digital
6 infrastructure technology with other systems,
7 products, tools, and applications;

8 (D) reducing project delays and cost over-
9 runs in projects that serve rural areas;

10 (E) reducing the total cost of drinking
11 water and wastewater infrastructure projects in
12 rural areas;

13 (F) understanding the impact of digital in-
14 frastructure technology in rural areas on sus-
15 tainability and resiliency of a public water sys-
16 tem or treatment works; and

17 (G) using digital infrastructure technology
18 to increase the affordability of drinking water,
19 wastewater, and stormwater services in rural
20 areas.

21 (e) REPORT.—Not later than December 31, 2030, the
22 Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to
23 the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the
24 Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infra-

1 structure of the House of Representatives a report de-
2 scribing—

3 (1) the results of the study under subsection

4 (d); and

5 (2) the results of the program.