

AMWA-backed water efficiency bill wins House passage

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The House of Representatives last week approved wide-ranging legislation that seeks to respond to the threats posed by long-term drought and increased wildfire activity. Included within the many provisions of the legislation were several new EPA grant programs to aid water systems' efforts to increase water efficiency – programs for which AMWA had previously expressed its support.

H.R. 5118, the **Wildfire Response and Drought Resiliency Act** (<https://rules.house.gov/sites/democrats.rules.house.gov/files/BILLS-117HR5118RH-RCP117-57.pdf>), represents a compilation of several dozen (<https://rules.house.gov/bill/117/hr-5118>) different proposals introduced in the House of Representatives over the past 18 months. Among those included in the larger bill is the Water Efficiency, Conservation, and Sustainability Act, for which AMWA expressed support (<https://www.amwa.net/article/water-efficiency-grant-bill-earns-amwas-support>) earlier this year. Under the proposal, public water systems will be eligible for two new EPA grant programs to support water-efficiency upgrades, identify and repair leaks and conduct annual water audits and establish water loss control programs, respectively. Each program would be authorized through the 2028 fiscal year.

Other components of the larger drought and wildfire legislation would:

- Authorize additional funding to support desalination research;
- Prioritize federal funding for water reuse and recycling projects that will provide more reliable water supplies for state and local governments;
- Promote the development of advanced technologies to improve water purification, desalination, reverse osmosis, or the reduction of water evaporation; and
- Develop a “National Water Data Framework” to improve national water resource management and offer federal grants to advance the development of water data infrastructure and technologies.

H.R. 5118 will now move on to the Senate, where its prospects for passage before the end of the year are unclear. AMWA will support passage of the legislation should it be brought to a vote on the Senate floor.

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