

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 16, 2015

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 615**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Rendon**

February 24, 2015

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An act to ~~add Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 12949.70) to Part 6 of Division 6 of~~ amend Section 189 of, and to add Section 79713.5 to, the Water Code, relating to water.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 615, as amended, Rendon. ~~The Center for Community Water Projects. Drinking water and wastewater treatment: technical assistance.~~

Existing law, the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014, approved by the voters as Proposition 1 at the November 4, 2014, statewide general election, authorizes the issuance of general obligation bonds in the amount of \$7,545,000,000 to finance a water quality, supply, and infrastructure improvement program. Proposition 1 makes available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, specified amounts of bond proceeds for grants and loans for projects that improve water quality or safe drinking water, for water recycling and advanced treatment technology projects, and for projects that prevent or clean up the contamination of groundwater, including providing technical assistance services to disadvantaged communities.

Existing law establishes the Office of Sustainable Water Solutions within the State Water Resources Control Board with the purpose of promoting permanent and sustainable drinking water and wastewater treatment solutions to ensure the effective and efficient provision of safe, clean, affordable, and reliable drinking water and wastewater treatment services. Existing law authorizes the office to take certain

*actions to further this purpose, including providing technical assistance to disadvantaged communities and small drinking water systems and wastewater systems.*

*This bill would specify the types of technical assistance services that may be provided for the purposes of these provisions. The bill would authorize the office, in collaboration with the California State University, to establish and administer at least one “Center for Excellence” for the purpose of providing technical assistance to disadvantaged communities in the region of the campus. The bill would require the state board to determine the number and location of centers, if any, that are necessary to adequately provide technical assistance to disadvantaged communities throughout the state. The bill would specify that a center may be funded by both public and private sources, including Proposition 1, but would require, if bond proceeds from that proposition or any other bond act are used, the office to separately account for those moneys. The bill would prohibit moneys from Proposition 1 to be used for the administration of a center.*

~~Existing law provides various technical assistance opportunities to disadvantaged communities for projects relating to groundwater sustainability, clean drinking water, and water recycling and advanced treatment water technology projects.~~

~~This bill would establish The Center for Community Water Projects, to be administered by the Division of Financial Assistance within the State Water Resources Control Board. The bill would declare the purpose of the center is to provide a centralized, multidisciplinary technical assistance program for disadvantaged communities and to assist those communities in designing and building clean and sustainable water projects. The bill would require the Division of Financial Assistance to provide a broad range of technical assistance to disadvantaged communities, as specified, to coordinate with other entities, and to contract with third party technical assistance providers, as necessary. The bill would authorize the center to receive funding from both public and private sources.~~

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1     SECTION 1. Section 189 of the Water Code is amended to  
2     read:

1 189. (a) There is hereby established the Office of Sustainable  
2 Water Solutions within the state board, which may be administered  
3 by the state board as a separate organizational unit or within the  
4 state board's divisions or offices.

5 (b) The purpose of the office is to promote permanent and  
6 sustainable drinking water and wastewater treatment solutions to  
7 ensure the effective and efficient provision of safe, clean,  
8 affordable, and reliable drinking water and wastewater treatment  
9 services. In furtherance of this purpose, the office may take, but  
10 is not limited to, all of the following actions:

11 (1) Coordinating with and providing assistance to small drinking  
12 water systems, wastewater treatment systems, and disadvantaged  
13 communities without drinking water or wastewater treatment  
14 systems.

15 (2) Promoting and facilitating regional drinking water and  
16 wastewater projects.

17 (3) Promoting and facilitating regional solutions, including  
18 consolidation of existing water districts, expansion of existing  
19 water districts to serve communities unserved by public water  
20 systems and wastewater treatment systems, and extension of  
21 services to underserved communities and disadvantaged  
22 communities.

23 (4) Advancing the delivery of affordable, safe drinking water  
24 to disadvantaged communities throughout the state.

25 (5) Providing technical assistance to disadvantaged communities  
26 and small drinking water systems and wastewater systems,  
27 ~~including grant application assistance, outreach and education in~~  
28 ~~vulnerable communities, financial management support, and~~  
29 ~~facilitation of discussions within and between communities.~~  
30 *systems. Technical assistance services include, but are not limited*  
31 *to, the following:*

32 (A) *Grant application assistance.*

33 (B) *Project development and management support.*

34 (C) *Engineering services.*

35 (D) *Financial management review and support.*

36 (E) *Environmental review.*

37 (F) *Operations and management review and support.*

38 (G) *Legal assistance.*

39 (H) *Certification and training of wastewater treatment plant*  
40 *operators.*

1     (I) Facilitation of discussions within and between communities.

2     (J) Outreach and education in vulnerable communities.

3     (K) Income surveys and other assessments needed to qualify  
4     for funding programs.

5     (c) (1) The office, in collaboration with the California State  
6     University, may establish and administer at least one “Center For  
7     Excellence” at a California State University campus with the  
8     purpose of providing, through collaboration between California  
9     State University faculty and students of that campus, the  
10    engineering and other types of technical assistance described in  
11    subdivision (b) in the region of the campus.

12    (2) The state board shall determine the number and the location  
13    of centers, if any, that are necessary to adequately provide  
14    technical assistance to disadvantaged communities throughout the  
15    state.

16    (3) A center may be funded by both public and private sources,  
17    including, but not limited to, bond proceeds from the Water  
18    Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014  
19    (Division 26.7 (commencing with Section 79700)). If bond proceeds  
20    from that act are used, or from any other bond act, the office shall  
21    separately account for those moneys to ensure the bond moneys  
22    are properly utilized for their intended purposes. Bond proceeds  
23    from the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement  
24    Act of 2014 shall not be used for the administration of a center  
25    but may be used to provide technical assistance to disadvantaged  
26    communities.

27    (4) The University of California is encouraged to develop, in  
28    collaboration with the office, a program similar to the one  
29    described in this subdivision.

30    SEC. 2. Section 79713.5 is added to the Water Code, to read:

31    79713.5. For the purpose of providing technical assistance to  
32    disadvantaged communities pursuant to Chapter 5 (commencing  
33    with Section 79720), 9 (commencing with Section 79765), or 10  
34    (commencing with Section 79770), technical assistance services  
35    include, but are not limited to, the following:

36    (a) Grant application assistance.

37    (b) Project development and management support.

38    (c) Engineering services.

39    (d) Financial management review and support.

40    (e) Environmental review.

1 (f) *Operations and management review and support.*

2 (g) *Legal assistance.*

3 (h) *Certification and training of wastewater treatment plant*  
4 *operators.*

5 (i) *Facilitation of discussions within and between communities.*

6 (j) *Outreach and education in vulnerable communities.*

7 (k) *Income surveys and other assessments needed to qualify for*  
8 *funding programs.*

9 ~~SEC. 2. Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 12949.70) is~~  
10 ~~added to Part 6 of Division 6 of the Water Code, to read:~~

11  
12 ~~CHAPTER 10. THE CENTER FOR COMMUNITY WATER PROJECTS~~  
13

14 ~~12949.70. There is hereby established The Center for~~  
15 ~~Community Water Projects, which shall be administered by the~~  
16 ~~Division of Financial Assistance within the State Water Resources~~  
17 ~~Control Board, and whose purpose is to provide a centralized,~~  
18 ~~multidisciplinary technical assistance program for disadvantaged~~  
19 ~~communities and to assist those communities in designing and~~  
20 ~~building clean and sustainable water projects.~~

21 ~~12949.71. For purposes of this chapter, “disadvantaged~~  
22 ~~community” has the meaning set forth in subdivision (a) of Section~~  
23 ~~79505.5, as it may be amended.~~

24 ~~12949.72. In administering the program, the division shall do~~  
25 ~~all of the following:~~

26 ~~(a) Provide a broad range of technical assistance to~~  
27 ~~disadvantaged communities, including, but not limited to,~~  
28 ~~engineering, operations, ecological, public finance, and economic~~  
29 ~~assistance, that would help those communities achieve the goals~~  
30 ~~described in Section 12949.70. The division shall also take into~~  
31 ~~account cultural and sociological considerations when providing~~  
32 ~~technical assistance to disadvantaged communities.~~

33 ~~(b) Coordinate, to the extent possible and applicable, with other~~  
34 ~~entities, including, but not limited to, the California State~~  
35 ~~University and any of its institutions, the University of California~~  
36 ~~and any of its campuses, the Department of Water Resources, and~~  
37 ~~the State Department of Public Health.~~

38 ~~(c) Contract with third party technical assistance providers as~~  
39 ~~necessary.~~

1     ~~12949.73. The Center for Community Water Projects may~~  
2     ~~receive funding from public and private sources, including, but~~  
3     ~~not limited to, the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure~~  
4     ~~Improvement Act of 2014 (Division 26.7 (commencing with~~  
5     ~~Section 79700)).~~