

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 2, 2015

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 23, 2015

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 16, 2015

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 615

Introduced by Assembly Member Rendon

February 24, 2015

An act to amend Section 189 of, and to add Section 189.5 to, of the Water Code, relating to water.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 615, as amended, Rendon. Office of Sustainable Water Solutions: 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 by the office and would authorize the office to establish and administer at least one “Center for Excellence” for the purpose of providing technical assistance to disadvantaged communities. The bill would authorize, in establishing and administering the center, the office to collaborate with the California State University, the University of California, nonprofit organizations, and other organizations that can help further the purpose of the center and 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. The bill would encourage the University of California to collaborate with the office to establish the center, develop a program similar to the center, or both. office.~~

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:
- 3 189. (a) There is hereby established the Office of Sustainable
- 4 Water Solutions within the state board, which may be administered
- 5 by the state board as a separate organizational unit or within the
- 6 state board’s divisions or offices.
- 7 (b) The purpose of the office is to promote permanent and
- 8 sustainable drinking water and wastewater treatment solutions to
- 9 ensure the effective and efficient provision of safe, clean,
- 10 affordable, and reliable drinking water and wastewater treatment
- 11 services. In furtherance of this purpose, the office may take, but
- 12 is not limited to, all of the following actions:

1 (1) Coordinating with and providing assistance to small drinking
2 water systems, wastewater treatment systems, and disadvantaged
3 communities without drinking water or wastewater treatment
4 systems.

5 (2) Promoting and facilitating regional drinking water and
6 wastewater projects.

7 (3) Promoting and facilitating regional solutions, including
8 consolidation of existing water districts, expansion of existing
9 water districts to serve communities unserved by public water
10 systems and wastewater treatment systems, and extension of
11 services to underserved communities and disadvantaged
12 communities.

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

15 (5) Providing technical assistance to disadvantaged communities
16 and small drinking water systems and wastewater systems.
17 Technical assistance services include, but are not limited to, the
18 following:

19 (A) Grant application assistance.

20 (B) Project development and management support.

21 (C) Engineering services.

22 (D) Financial management review and support.

23 (E) Environmental review.

24 (F) Operations and management review and support.

25 (G) Legal assistance.

26 (H) Certification and training of wastewater treatment plant
27 operators.

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

29 (J) Outreach and education in vulnerable communities.

30 (K) Income surveys and other assessments needed to qualify
31 for funding programs.

32 ~~SEC. 2.— Section 189.5 is added to the Water Code, to read:~~

33 ~~189.5. (a) The Office of Sustainable Water Solutions may~~
34 ~~establish and administer at least one “Center For Excellence” at a~~
35 ~~California State University campus with the purpose of providing~~
36 ~~engineering and other types of technical assistance described in~~
37 ~~Section 189. In establishing the center, the office may collaborate~~
38 ~~with the California State University, the University of California,~~
39 ~~nonprofit organizations, and other organizations that can help~~
40 ~~further the purpose of the center. Technical assistance may be~~

1 provided by students, faculty, members of nonprofit organizations,
2 and other persons with relevant expertise or knowledge, as deemed
3 appropriate by the office.

4 (b) ~~The state board shall determine the number and the location~~
5 ~~of centers, if any, that are necessary to adequately provide technical~~
6 ~~assistance to disadvantaged communities throughout the state.~~

7 (e) ~~A center may be funded by both public and private sources,~~
8 ~~including, but not limited to, bond proceeds from the Water~~
9 ~~Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014~~
10 ~~(Division 26.7 (commencing with Section 79700)). If bond~~
11 ~~proceeds from that act are used, or from any other bond act, the~~
12 ~~office shall separately account for those moneys to ensure the bond~~
13 ~~moneys are properly utilized for their intended purposes. Bond~~
14 ~~proceeds from the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure~~
15 ~~Improvement Act of 2014 shall not be used for the administration~~
16 ~~of a center but may be used to provide technical assistance to~~
17 ~~disadvantaged communities.~~

18 (d) ~~The University of California is encouraged to collaborate~~
19 ~~with the office to establish the center described in this section,~~
20 ~~develop a program similar to the center described in this section,~~
21 ~~or both.~~