

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. House of Representatives today approved legislation co-sponsored by U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell that promises to significantly boost Arizona's share of federal Clean Water State Revolving Funds ("SRFs").

The legislation, H.R. 720, would replace the current, outdated allocation formula which is based on 1970 Census data, and has cost Arizona millions of dollars.

Arizona ranks 10th in the nation in wastewater infrastructure need, 20th in population, but under the current formula, is ranked 38th in SRF funds. Calculated on a per capita basis, Arizona ranks last, or 53rd, in the nation - behind even the U.S. territories - in SRF funds received.

"For nearly three decades, the federal government has short-changed Arizona on wastewater infrastructure," Mitchell told the House during the debate. "Instead of allocating funds based on needs, it has inequitably and inexplicably continued to use 1970 Census data as a part of its allocation formula. Since 1970, our state has more than tripled in population. As a result, we have become the victims of an alarming disparity."

SRFs help construct publicly owned wastewater treatment facilities.

Calling the formula "inequitable," Mitchell raised the issue with both the committee and the Environmental Protection Agency in January. Mitchell used his first hearing as a member of the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment to question the EPA's assistant administrator for water, Benjamin Grumbles, about the formula. On Jan. 23, Mitchell sent Grumbles a letter asking him to provide further information about the EPA's use of the 1970s-era formula to distribute SRFs.

Despite the continued shortchanging of Arizona taxpayers, Congress and the Administration have slashed Arizona's clean water revolving funds funding by 41 percent since 2004. In 2006 alone, Arizona's share was cut by \$1.2 million. [See: <http://www.azwifa.gov/QuickLinks/0805newsletter.pdf>]

In fiscal year 2006, Congress appropriated \$886 million in SRFs. H.R. 720 authorizes \$20 billion in funding over the next five years.