

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure 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The legislation, H.R. 720, would replace the current, outdated allocation formula which is based on 1970 Census data, and as a result, has cost Arizona millions of dollars.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.

"Arizona's population has more than tripled since 1970 and its time for federal funding to reflect that," said Mitchell. "We're the fastest growing state in the nation, and we have serious needs. We deserve our fair share, and with the Senate's help, I hope we'll finally get it."

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 last month. 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 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.

Text of Mitchell's January 23 letter to the EPA:

Honorable Benjamin H. Grumbles
Assistant Administrator for Office of Water
United States Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Ariel Rios Building, Room 3343, Mail Code 4101M
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Mr. Grumbles:

Thank you for appearing before the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment on Friday, January 19, 2007.

I regret that, due to time constraints, we were unable to complete our discussion about the allocation formula for Clean Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs). As you know, I am extremely concerned that, due to the continued use of 1970 Census data, Arizona is receiving far less than its fair share of federal funds. Our state ranks 38th in receipt of federal funding for SRFs, despite the fact that we now rank 20th in population, and 10th in terms of need.

Therefore, I am hereby requesting expanded responses to the attached list of questions for the subcommittee's written record.

I would appreciate your submitting responses by the close of business on February 9, 2007 to Matt Weisman, in room 2434 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515, and please provide an electronic copy to matthew.weisman@mail.house.gov. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office at 202-225-2190.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Harry E. Mitchell
Member of Congress

"The Need for Renewed Investment in Clean Water Infrastructure"

Questions for the Record
Representative Harry Mitchell

January 19, 2007

1. Please explain what procedures, if any, the Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") uses to ensure that the allocation of federal funds to Clean Water State Revolving Funds ("SRFs") is equitable.
2. Does the EPA regularly review its procedures for ensuring the allocation of federal funds to SRFs is equitable? If so, please indicate how often, and describe the review process.
3. Has the EPA ever taken a position regarding the use of 1970 Census data to determine the allocation of federal funding for SRFs? If so, please describe.
4. Understanding that the allocation of federal funding for SRFs is supposed to be based on population as well as need, does the EPA believe the current allocation is equitable? Please describe why or why not.
5. Has the EPA ever issued any written or verbal recommendation to Congress, or any other governmental or non-governmental entity, that that the use of 1970 Census data to determine the allocation of federal funds to SRFs be discontinued, modified and/or updated? If so, please describe.

6. Please estimate how much federal funding Arizona would have received between 1980 - 2006 if the allocation formula for federal funding for SRFs had used 1980, 1990 and 2000 Census data, as soon as such data became available.

Mitchell opening statement at today's House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee markup:

"Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

"Thank you for your leadership on clean water issues.

"This committee is poised to pass approve today that is critical to Arizona, and I want to express my gratitude.

"Since 1970, Arizona has experienced unparalleled growth...and, as a result, an unparalleled increase in its need for basic services.

"Key among these has been the need for wastewater infrastructure.

"The federal government has a proud tradition of helping states meet their local wastewater infrastructure needs by distributing money to Clean Water State Revolving Funds ('SRFs').

"However, for nearly three decades the federal government has been short-changing Arizona.

"Inexplicably, and inequitably, the federal government has continued to use 1970 Census data to determine its allocation of funds to SRFs.

"The result has been an alarming disparity.

"Arizona currently ranks 10th in need, and 20th in population, but only 38th in receipt of SRF funding.

"On a per capita basis, Arizona ranks 53rd. We are dead-last. Even the territories do better than we do.

"This is unfair, and needs to be changed.

"Today, I am pleased to report that this Committee stands ready to do just that. The Clean Water Quality Financing Act of 2007, which we are marking up today, lays the groundwork for a transition away from the current, inequitable, allocation formula, and toward a new formula based on need.

"It's the right thing to do, and on behalf of a grateful district, and a grateful state, I offer my heartfelt thanks to the Committee.

"I yield back the balance of my time."