



AB 277
ASSEMBLYMAN DEVON MATHIS
Low-Interest Loan and Grant Program for
Homeowners and Renters: Water and
Wastewater Improvements

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BILL:

This bill will authorize the State Water Resource Control Board (state board) to use funding appropriated in previous budget acts for the purpose of funding grant and loan programs for homeowners and renters' water and wastewater improvement projects. The loans will be applied for and administered by counties and eligible nonprofits; the state board will supervise the recipient counties and nonprofits in the disbursement of the grants and loans.

PROBLEM & NEED FOR BILL:

Background on the Safe Drinking State Revolving Fund:

Existing law establishes the Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, which provides grants or loans for the purpose of constructing projects for public water systems, to assist in meeting the State's safe drinking water standards.

Problems Created by the Existing Loan and Grant System:

Despite monies being appropriated within the 2016 Budget, there are few to no programs in place to assist individuals and families, who are severely impacted by the drought, to apply for financial assistance with water and wastewater improvement projects on private property. These groups, who often rely upon groundwater sources for drinking water, have been disproportionately impacted by the drought due to overdraft and subsidence. Furthermore, a large quantity of the groundwater extracted is extremely contaminated, threatening these communities and individuals' health and safety.

Many of these individuals and communities are unable to afford high-interest, private loans to obtain safe and clean drinking water. In many cases, these groups could greatly benefit from wastewater systems and homeowner water improvement programs. As such, funds were allocated for this purpose, yet no means were provided for the obtaining of funds.

Although the state board has made attempts to combat water quality problems, there lacks local authority over the disbursement of the grants to mitigate these disasters internally. This hampers relief efforts as problems go unaddressed by an over-encumbered state board. With further increases in local control, California can expect rapid improvements to dangerous water conditions.

Need for this Bill:

AB 277 establishes the necessary framework for the proper distribution and implementation of drought relief funds appropriated within annual budget acts. The program framework outlined within this bill is vital for the families and communities most harshly impacted by the drought. Through the appropriation of monies to local agencies, designed to address problems of water quality at the local level, the state board can direct energy and attention towards mitigating other problems.

In addition, contaminated drinking water quality cannot be allowed to remain at such dangerous levels. This poses a severe health risk to all regions, yet disproportionately affects low income and minority regions more severely. As such, AB 277 seeks to grant counties and nonprofits the local control necessary for the continuation of California's safe drinking water standards.

SUPPORT

None on file

OPPOSITION

None on file

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For More Information

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