

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 5504

To require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Secretary of Agriculture to maintain the Urban Waters Federal Partnership Program, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 5, 2021

Mr. STANTON (for himself and Mr. MELJER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committees on Natural Resources, and Appropriations, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Secretary of Agriculture to maintain the Urban Waters Federal Partnership Program, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Urban Waters Federal  
5 Partnership Act of 2021”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-  
4 trator” means the Administrator of the Environ-  
5 mental Protection Agency.

6 (2) MEMBER AGENCIES.—The term “member  
7 agencies” means each of—

8 (A) the Environmental Protection Agency;

9 (B) the Department of the Interior;

10 (C) the Department of Agriculture;

11 (D) the Corps of Engineers;

12 (E) the National Oceanic and Atmospheric  
13 Administration;

14 (F) the Economic Development Adminis-  
15 tration;

16 (G) the Department of Housing and Urban  
17 Development;

18 (H) the Department of Transportation;

19 (I) the Department of Energy;

20 (J) the Department of Education;

21 (K) the National Institute for Environ-  
22 mental Health Sciences;

23 (L) the Community Development Financial  
24 Institutions Fund;

25 (M) the Federal Emergency Management  
26 Agency;

1 (N) the Corporation for National and  
2 Community Service; and

3 (O) such other agencies, departments, and  
4 bureaus that elect to participate in the Urban  
5 Waters program as the missions, authorities,  
6 and appropriated funding of those agencies, de-  
7 partments, and bureaus allow.

8 (3) SECRETARIES.—The term “Secretaries”  
9 means the Secretary of the Interior and the Sec-  
10 retary of Agriculture.

11 (4) URBAN WATERS AMBASSADOR.—The term  
12 “Urban Waters ambassador” means a person who—

13 (A) is locally based near the applicable  
14 Urban Waters partnership location; and

15 (B) serves in a central coordinating role  
16 for the work carried out in the applicable  
17 Urban Waters partnership location with respect  
18 to the Urban Waters program.

19 (5) URBAN WATERS NONPARTNERSHIP LOCA-  
20 TION.—The term “Urban Waters nonpartnership lo-  
21 cation” means an urban or municipal site and the  
22 associated watershed or waterbody of the site—

23 (A) that receives Federal support for ac-  
24 tivities that advance the purpose of the Urban  
25 Waters program; but

1 (B)(i) that is not formally designated as an  
 2 Urban Waters partnership location; and

3 (ii) for which is not maintained—

4 (I) an active partnership with an  
 5 Urban Waters ambassador; or

6 (II) an Urban Waters partnership lo-  
 7 cation workplan.

8 (6) URBAN WATERS PARTNERSHIP LOCATION.—

9 The term “Urban Waters partnership location”  
 10 means an urban or municipal site and the associated  
 11 watershed or waterbody of the site for which—

12 (A) the Administrator, in collaboration  
 13 with the heads of the other member agencies,  
 14 has formally designated as a partnership loca-  
 15 tion under the Urban Waters program; and

16 (B) an active partnership with an Urban  
 17 Waters ambassador is maintained.

18 (7) URBAN WATERS PARTNERSHIP LOCATION

19 WORKPLAN.—The term “Urban Waters partnership  
 20 location workplan” means the plan for projects and  
 21 actions that is coordinated across an Urban Waters  
 22 partnership location.

23 (8) URBAN WATERS PROGRAM.—The term

24 “Urban Waters program” means the program estab-  
 25 lished under section 3(a).

1 **SEC. 3. URBAN WATERS FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP PRO-**  
2 **GRAM.**

3 (a) AUTHORIZATION.—There is authorized a pro-  
4 gram, to be known as the “Urban Waters Federal Part-  
5 nership Program”, administered by the partnership of the  
6 member agencies—

7 (1) to jointly support and execute the goals of  
8 the Urban Waters program through the independent  
9 authorities and appropriated funding of the member  
10 agencies; and

11 (2) to advance the purpose described in sub-  
12 section (b) within designated Urban Waters partner-  
13 ship locations and other urban and suburban com-  
14 munities in the United States.

15 (b) PROGRAM PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Urban  
16 Waters program is to reconnect urban communities, par-  
17 ticularly urban communities that are overburdened or eco-  
18 nomically distressed, with associated waterways by im-  
19 proving coordination among Federal agencies.

20 (c) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the availability of  
22 appropriations, the Administrator, in coordination  
23 with the Secretaries and, as appropriate, the heads  
24 of the other member agencies, shall maintain the  
25 Urban Waters program in accordance with this sub-  
26 section.

1           (2) URBAN WATERS FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP  
2       STEERING COMMITTEE.—

3           (A) ESTABLISHMENT.—

4           (i) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator  
5       shall establish a steering committee for the  
6       Urban Waters program (referred to in this  
7       paragraph as the “steering committee”).

8           (ii) CHAIR.—The Administrator shall  
9       serve as chairperson of the steering com-  
10      mittee.

11          (iii) VICE-CHAIRS.—The Secretaries  
12      shall serve as vice-chairpersons of the  
13      steering committee.

14          (iv) MEMBERSHIP.—In addition to the  
15      Administrator and the Secretaries, the  
16      members of the steering committee shall be  
17      the senior officials (or their designees)  
18      from such member agencies as the Admin-  
19      istrator shall designate.

20          (B) DUTIES.—The steering committee  
21      shall provide general guidance to the member  
22      agencies with respect to the Urban Waters pro-  
23      gram, including guidance with respect to—

1 (i) the identification of annual priority  
2 issues for special emphasis within Urban  
3 Waters partnership locations; and

4 (ii) the identification of funding op-  
5 portunities, which shall be communicated  
6 to all Urban Waters partnership locations.

7 (C) INTERAGENCY FINANCING.—Notwith-  
8 standing section 1346 of title 31, United States  
9 Code, section 708 of division E of the Consoli-  
10 dated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law  
11 116–260), or any other similar provision of law,  
12 member agencies may—

13 (i) provide interagency financing to  
14 the steering committee; and

15 (ii) directly transfer such amounts as  
16 are necessary to support the activities of  
17 the steering committee.

18 (3) AUTHORITY.—

19 (A) PARTNERSHIP LOCATIONS.—

20 (i) PARTNERSHIP LOCATIONS.—The  
21 Administrator and the Secretaries shall  
22 maintain an active partnership program  
23 under the Urban Waters program at each  
24 Urban Waters partnership location, includ-  
25 ing each Urban Waters partnership loca-

tion in existence on the date of enactment  
of this Act, by providing—

(I) technical assistance for  
projects to be carried out within the  
Urban Waters partnership location;

(II) funding for projects to be  
carried out within the Urban Waters  
partnership location;

(III) funding for an Urban  
Waters ambassador for the Urban  
Waters partnership location; and

(IV) coordination support with  
other member agencies with respect to  
activities carried out at the Urban  
Waters partnership location.

(ii) NEW PARTNERSHIP LOCATIONS.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—The Adminis-  
trator and the Secretaries may, in  
consultation with the heads of other  
member agencies, establish new  
Urban Waters partnership locations.

(II) NONPARTNERSHIP LOCA-  
TIONS.—A community with an Urban  
Waters nonpartnership location may,  
at the discretion of the community,



1 seek to have the Urban Waters non-  
2 partnership location designated as an  
3 Urban Waters partnership location.

4 (B) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—

5 (i) DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE ENTI-  
6 TY.—In this subparagraph, the term “eli-  
7 gible entity” means—

8 (I) a State;

9 (II) a territory or possession of  
10 the United States;

11 (III) the District of Columbia;

12 (IV) an Indian Tribe;

13 (V) a unit of local government;

14 (VI) a public or private institu-  
15 tion of higher education;

16 (VII) a public or private non-  
17 profit institution;

18 (VIII) an intertribal consortium;

19 (IX) an interstate agency; and

20 (X) any other entity determined  
21 to be appropriate by the Adminis-  
22 trator.

23 (ii) ACTIVITIES.—In carrying out the  
24 Urban Waters program, a member agency  
25 may—

1 (I) encourage, cooperate with,  
2 and render technical services to and  
3 provide financial assistance to sup-  
4 port—

5 (aa) Urban Water ambas-  
6 sadors to conduct activities with  
7 respect to the applicable Urban  
8 Waters partnership location, in-  
9 cluding—

10 (AA) convening the ap-  
11 propriate Federal and non-  
12 Federal partners for the  
13 Urban Waters partnership  
14 location;

15 (BB) developing and  
16 carrying out an Urban  
17 Waters partnership location  
18 workplan;

19 (CC) leveraging avail-  
20 able Federal and non-Fed-  
21 eral resources for projects  
22 within the Urban Waters  
23 partnership location; and

24 (DD) sharing informa-  
25 tion and best practices with

1 the Urban Waters Learning  
2 Network established under  
3 subparagraph (C); and

4 (bb) an eligible entity in car-  
5 rying out—

6 (AA) projects at Urban  
7 Water partnership locations  
8 that provide habitat or  
9 water quality improvements,  
10 increase river recreation, en-  
11 hance community resiliency,  
12 install infrastructure,  
13 strengthen community en-  
14 gagement with and edu-  
15 cation with respect to water  
16 resources, or support plan-  
17 ning, coordination, and exe-  
18 cution of projects identified  
19 in the applicable Urban  
20 Waters partnership location  
21 workplan; and

22 (BB) planning, re-  
23 search, experiments, dem-  
24 onstrations, surveys, studies,  
25 monitoring, training, and

1 outreach to advance the pur-  
2 pose described in subsection  
3 (b) within Urban Waters  
4 partnership locations and in  
5 Urban Waters nonpartner-  
6 ship locations; and

7 (II) transfer funds to or enter  
8 into interagency agreements with  
9 other member agencies as necessary  
10 to carry out the Urban Waters pro-  
11 gram.

12 (C) URBAN WATERS LEARNING NET-  
13 WORK.—The Administrator and the Secretaries  
14 shall maintain an Urban Waters Learning Net-  
15 work—

16 (i) to share information, resources,  
17 and tools between Urban Waters partner-  
18 ship locations and with other interested  
19 communities; and

20 (ii) to carry out community-based ca-  
21 pacity building that advances the goals of  
22 the Urban Waters program.

23 (D) WORKPLAN PROGRESS.—Progress in  
24 addressing the goals of the Urban Waters part-  
25 nership location workplan of an Urban Waters

1 partnership location shall be shared with the  
2 Urban Waters program at regular intervals, as  
3 determined by the Administrator and the Secre-  
4 taries.

5 (d) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—The Administrator  
6 and the Secretaries shall annually submit to the appro-  
7 priate committees of Congress a report describing the  
8 progress in carrying out the Urban Waters program,  
9 which shall include—

10 (1) a description of the use of funds under the  
11 Urban Waters program;

12 (2) a description of the progress made in car-  
13 rying out Urban Waters partnership location  
14 workplans; and

15 (3) any additional information that the Admin-  
16 istrator and the Secretaries determine to be appro-  
17 priate.

18 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be  
20 appropriated to the Administrator to carry out the  
21 Urban Waters program \$10,000,000 for each of fis-  
22 cal years 2022 through 2026.

23 (2) USE OF FUNDS.—Notwithstanding any  
24 other provision of law, activities carried out using  
25 amounts made available to the Administrator under

1 paragraph (1) may be used in conjunction with  
2 amounts made available from—

3 (A) other member agencies; and

4 (B) non-Federal entities that participate in  
5 the Urban Waters program.

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