



Duckworth, Braun Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Enhance Drinking Water Infrastructure in Distressed Communities

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Mike Braun (R-IN) today introduced bipartisan legislation to help improve the quality of drinking water for millions of Americans living in distressed communities. The bipartisan *Voluntary Water Partnerships for Distressed Communities Act* would make it easier for community water systems to engage in voluntary partnerships that drive efficiency and improve water treatment and infrastructure.

“Every American has a right to drink clean water, no matter where they live, the color of their skin or the size of their paycheck,” Duckworth said. “I’m proud to be working with Senator Braun to advance our important bipartisan legislation that will help reduce water costs for Illinoisans by making it easier for community water systems to work together and improve their water services.”

“There’s nothing more basic than having clean healthy drinking water, and as a conservationist and believer that local solutions work best I am proud to join Senator Duckworth in introducing this bill to allow community water systems in distressed areas to partner up to take on the high costs of water treatment infrastructure together,” Braun said. “Through these partnerships, community systems can realize efficiencies that will help to avoid increased costs for Hoosier water users.”

Specifically, the *Voluntary Water Partnerships for Distressed Communities Act* would help utilities engage in partnerships in many ways, including:

Preventing a community water system from being levied with an enforcement action for 180 days, so long as the community water system is actively and in good faith working to enter into a partnership, with the exception being an imminent public health threat

- Defining a partnership as a joint enterprise between community water systems
- Requiring that the partnership be in compliance with drinking water standards within three years after the partnership is formed or a date determined by the State or the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Duckworth is the Ranking Member of the Senate Subcommittee with jurisdiction over the *Safe Drinking Water Act* and has introduced several pieces of legislation that would help ensure access to clean drinking water, including the [Great Lakes Water Protection Act](#), the [Get the Lead out of Assisted Housing Act](#), and the [National Opportunity for Lead Exposure Accountability and Deterrence \(NO LEAD\) Act](#). She has also been [outspoken](#) about the Trump Administration's decision to roll back the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule, which would threaten access to clean, safe drinking water for millions of Americans, especially low income families and communities of color.

This legislation is supported by the Rural Community Assistance Partnership and the National Association of Water Companies.