To provide for assistance to rural water, wastewater, and waste disposal systems affected by the COVID–19 pandemic, and for other purposes.

A BILL

To provide for assistance to rural water, wastewater, and waste disposal systems affected by the COVID–19 pandemic, and for other purposes.

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Emergency Assistance for Rural Water Systems Act of 2021”.

SEC. 2. EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR RURAL WATER SYS-
TEMS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:
(1) **ELIGIBLE ENTITY.**—The term “eligible entity” means a rural water, wastewater, or waste disposal facility with respect to which assistance may be provided under a water, wastewater, or waste disposal program under section 306(a), 306A, 306C, or 306D of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1926(a), 1926a, 1926c, 1926d).

(2) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Agriculture.

(b) **EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE.**—The Secretary may—

(1) provide a grant, a zero percent interest loan, or a 1 percent interest loan to, forgive principal or interest or modify any term or condition of an outstanding loan made to, or refinance part or all of any other loan (if the purpose of the loan is an eligible purpose under section 306(a)(1) or 306C of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1926(a)(1), 1926c)) made to, an eligible entity; or

(2) reduce or eliminate any fee that is or would otherwise be required to be paid under section 306(a)(1) of that Act (7 U.S.C. 1926(a)(1)) with respect to a loan guarantee provided to an eligible entity, on the condition that the eligible entity receives
the benefit resulting from the reduction or elimination of the fee.

(c) LEVEL OF ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may provide assistance to an eligible entity under subsection (b) as the Secretary determines is necessary—

(1) to ensure that the eligible entity has the necessary resources to maintain public health, safety, or order;

(2) to address financial hardships of the eligible entity due to the COVID–19 public health emergency; or

(3) to promote the financial stability of the eligible entity.

(d) USE OF ASSISTANCE.—An eligible entity to which assistance is provided under subsection (b) may use the assistance—

(1) for any purpose for which the eligible entity is eligible for assistance under the relevant provision of law referred to in subsection (a)(1); or

(2) for any direct operational expenses of incurred by the eligible entity, as determined by the Secretary.

(e) APPROPRIATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Out of any amounts in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, there is appro-
appropriated to the Secretary $1,000,000,000 to carry out this section.

(2) Reservation for Administrative Expenses.—The Secretary shall reserve 3 percent of the amount appropriated by paragraph (1) for administrative expenses incurred by the Secretary in carrying out this section.

(3) Availability.—The amount appropriated by paragraph (1) shall remain available through December 31, 2022.