

Boozman, Kelly Champion Proactive Support for Maintenance and Security of Rural Water Systems

Senators Introduce FLOWS Act to Strengthen Water Infrastructure Nationwide

WASHINGTON—Mar 04 2026—U.S. Senators John Boozman (R-AR) and Mark Kelly (D-AZ) introduced the *Futureproofing Local Operations for Water Systems (FLOWS) Act of 2026*, legislation to launch a targeted grant program to help rural utilities improve reliability while also strengthening and modernizing their cybersecurity.

Rural water and wastewater systems are struggling with aging infrastructure, limited staffing and rising operational costs. Many of these systems serve fewer than 3,300 people and are under-resourced, increasing challenges to deploying modern tools that larger utilities rely on to detect leaks, manage pressure, monitor water quality and prevent service disruptions. These limitations drive higher costs for rural residents, reduce system reliability and leave communities more vulnerable to cyber threats.

Small and rural wastewater systems struggling with fewer staff, aging infrastructure and unsustainable base rates would greatly benefit from modern digital tools such as leak and pressure monitoring as well as digital security training and maintenance. The legislation authorizes \$50 million annually for these improvements, targeted to the smallest and most economically challenged rural communities.

“Local water providers in The Natural State and across the country work hard every day to deliver reliable water services despite growing infrastructure demands and tight budgets,” **said Boozman**. “The FLOWS Act can offer targeted support to help modernize drinking water, wastewater and stormwater systems with advanced technologies that improve efficiency, reliability and their capacity to safeguard against cyber vulnerabilities long-term. Helping expand access to these tools is a smart step forward to keep costs affordable for households and businesses while strengthening protections against service disruptions — all without creating bureaucratic red tape.”

“Every family deserves safe drinking water. That requires up-to-date, reliable water infrastructure,” **said Kelly**. “Right now, rural communities are dealing with aging systems, tight budgets, and growing cyber threats. We’re helping local water providers upgrade their equipment, catch problems before they become costly emergencies, and protect their systems from attacks so families aren’t left footing the bill for breakdowns and disruptions.”

The *FLOWS Act* would establish a competitive EPA grant program to help rural communities modernize their water, wastewater and stormwater systems using digital technologies such as real-time sensing, industrial control systems, artificial intelligence tools, and advanced modeling software. Grants may also be used for workforce training and ongoing cybersecurity assistance.

The measure has garnered support from the National Rural Water Association, National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA), Bentley, Autodesk, Grundfos, Xylem, American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), Arkansas Rural Water Association and Business Software Alliance.

“The Arkansas Rural Water Association supports the Futureproofing Local Operations for Water Systems Act of 2026, or FLOWS Act. This legislation will strengthen and streamline day-to-day operations for small and rural water and wastewater systems statewide. By expanding access to critical information and modern operational technology, utilities will be better equipped to handle

growing issues and have the technology to respond quicker to everyday emergencies," **said Arkansas Rural Water Association CEO Chris Harris.**

"The FLOWS Act gives smaller, less-resourced utilities the ability to adopt innovative technologies that improve water quality and protect long-term affordability, a critical step forward for communities that often lack access to modern tools. We appreciate Senator Boozman's leadership in ensuring rural clean water systems have the support they need to modernize and thrive," **said NACWA CEO Adam Krantz.**

"The National Rural Water Association supports the Futureproofing Local Operations for Water Systems Act of 2026, or FLOWS Act. This legislation will give small and rural water systems across the country access to information and operational technology, providing them the opportunity to improve efficiency, reduce waste, and continue protecting the public health of the communities they serve," **said National Rural Water Association Executive Director Matthew Holmes.**

"The 2025 Report Card for America's Infrastructure found that to raise the grades for our nation's drinking water and wastewater systems, we must be helping local utilities implement digital technologies that can improve system operations and efficiency. ASCE applauds the FLOWS Act as a practical, commonsense step to modernize how we plan, operate, and maintain our nation's vital water infrastructure. By providing rural communities with access to the digital tools they need to provide safe water systems and opportunities to train their local workforce on these tools, the FLOWS Act is bringing technology solutions to the communities that need it most," **said ASCE President Marsha Anderson Bomar, Ph.D.**

"Bentley Systems applauds Senator Boozman's leadership in introducing the FLOWS Act. This legislation empowers project managers, agencies, and states with digital infrastructure technologies in order to design, build, operate more resilient and efficient water infrastructure," **said Bentley Systems U.S. Government Relations Director David Lieberman.** "Investing in digital twin technology and AI will directly improve the performance of water systems in rural America. The FLOWS Act provides a vital investment in modernizing essential infrastructure for the health and safety of our nation's communities."

Text of the legislation is available [here](#).

Associated Image:



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