

KAMALA D. HARRIS  
U.S. Senator for California



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## Water Justice Act

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Every American has the right to clean water, but too many communities are confronting the effects of contaminated drinking water, increasing water bills, and the lack of a sustainable water supply. Particularly in communities of color like Flint, Michigan and throughout California’s Central Valley, working and middle-class Americans bear the brunt of pollution and crumbling infrastructure at the expense of their health and economic stability. The threat of climate change, which has and will continue to intensify water scarcity and extreme weather conditions, underscores the need to address the water crisis before it’s too late.

Already, at least 40 states are anticipating water shortages by 2024, and the infrastructure to store and recycle water is aging and technologically dated. Further, the water supplied to Americans today is often neither safe nor affordable. In recent years, of those schools that conducted tests for contamination, 37 percent—serving an estimated 13 million students—tested positive for lead in their drinking water and 30 percent of U.S. community water systems reported having some lead-containing service lines in their system. Since 2010, household water rates have increased by approximately 41 percent, with as many as 15 percent of households facing water affordability challenges.

U.S. Senator Kamala D. Harris (D-CA) is introducing the *Water Justice Act* as a comprehensive approach to the nation’s water crisis that is based in fairness and equity, paying particular attention to the water needs of historically at-risk communities and individuals. The *Water Justice Act* consists of three main planks, each of which addresses a specific threat to our ability to ensure America’s water supply is safe, affordable, and sustainable. The *Water Justice Act* will make a \$250 billion critical investment in:

- **Safe Water:** Recognize the ongoing national emergency of unsafe drinking water and invest nearly \$220 billion in clean and safe drinking water initiatives with priority given to high-risk and environmentally at-risk communities and schools.
  - **Declare a Drinking Water Infrastructure Emergency** – direct \$50 billion in emergency funds toward contaminated communities and schools to test for contaminants in water and remediate or replace toxic drinking water infrastructure.
  - Invest nearly \$170 billion in *Safe Drinking Water Act* and *Clean Water Act* programs.
- **Affordable Water:** Establish a \$10 billion program to allow states to offset the cost of water bills in low-income communities and households that are environmentally at-risk.
  - “Environmentally at-risk” households will be determined using such factors as proximity to an environmentally hazardous site, proximity to a pollution hotspot, or whether the area has been found in violation of *Safe Drinking Water Act* and *Clean Water Act* standards.
- **Sustainable Water:** Invest \$20 billion in a diverse range of sustainable water supply, recycling, and conservation programs. Among other steps to improve water infrastructure, the legislation would:
  - Expand the federal government’s only water reuse and recycling program.
  - Increase mandatory spending for sustainable water infrastructure programs.
  - Establish a new water efficiency and conservation block grant program.
  - Reauthorize the Rural Water Supply Program.