



County of Tulare

RURAL COMMUNITY WATER SYSTEMS

AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND/OR CIRCUIT RIDER PROGRAM \$1.5 MILLION

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Tulare County has the largest number of public water systems unable to provide safe drinking water of any county in California. Over 40% of private drinking wells and over 30% of public small drinking systems and school systems exceed the California Department of Public Health's maximum contaminate levels. Thirty of Tulare County's communities are disadvantaged, have contaminated drinking water systems and are unable to seek regional, sustainable water solutions without funding for necessary studies and engineering. Ratepayers in these small communities, with limited numbers of users and operating at full capacity, are already paying about \$70 per month for water system support and it is not feasible to levy additional fees to improve the outdated or inadequate water systems.

These impoverished communities have volunteers that manage and maintain the water systems. Due to language and education barriers, most of these communities are unable to compete for grant funding to repair or consolidate their systems into larger, economically feasible operations.

In May of 2007 the Tulare County Board of Supervisors appointed an eleven member Water Commission that is responsible for developing recommendations for both water quantity and quality within Tulare County. Through the efforts of this Commission, the recommended approach for remediation of small water systems that are out of compliance is to seek regional solutions and consolidation whenever possible. Many of the small systems that operate within Tulare County would benefit from consolidation into larger adjacent municipal water systems.

Tulare County is seeking assistance to facilitate the planning, engineering surveys, assessments, and capital improvements necessary to develop sustainable water supplies for these small disadvantaged communities. The County has identified needs in excess of \$200 million for small system consolidation or re-designs. It is estimated that \$1.5 million will be required for initial studies, engineering, and construction related activities to begin.

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