

## SENATOR PAUL SIMON WATER FOR THE WORLD ACT OF 2009

*“The most disturbing sight Paul Simon witnessed as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was in Somalia. People were dying for lack of water. He knew the United States had the ability and resources to be a leader in world water policy. The will to accept this challenge means long term commitment. The Water for the World Act ensures our resolve to meet this challenge.”*  
– Patti Simon

The Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act of 2005 made access to safe water and sanitation for developing countries a specific policy objective of the United States Foreign Assistance Program. The Act was named after the late Paul Simon, who ten years ago wrote the prescient book, *Tapped Out*, which warned of the world’s looming clean water crisis. The Act has already made a difference in the world: last year alone the U.S. helped provide nearly 2 million people with first time access to an improved source of drinking water and more than 1.5 million people to improved sanitation.

To build on the progress achieved through the Water for the Poor Act, Senators Durbin, Corker, and Murray have introduced the Paul Simon Water for the World Act of 2009 (S.624). This bill would place water in the forefront of America’s development priorities, seeking to reach **100 million people with first-time, sustainable access to clean water and sanitation by 2015**. To achieve this goal, the bill would:

- Target underdeveloped countries with focused initiatives to improve access to clean water and sanitation;
- Foster global cooperation on research and technology development, including regional partnerships among experts on clean water;
- Provide technical assistance and capacity-building to develop expertise within countries facing water and sanitation challenges;
- Provide seed money for the deployment of clean water and sanitation technologies; and
- Strengthen the human infrastructure at USAID and the State Department to implement clean water and sanitation programs effectively and to ensure that water receives priority attention in our foreign policy efforts.

The Water for the World Act represents a robust U.S. contribution to the Millennium Development Goal on water, which is to reduce by 50 percent the proportion of the world population without safe water and sanitation by 2015.

### **Why Water?**

Through the Water for the Poor Act, millions of people have gained access to clean water and improved sanitation since 2005. Yet, water will continue to be one of the world’s most pressing problems over the next century:

- Almost 1 billion people still lack access to safe drinking water, and as many as 3 billion may face shortages by 2025 due in part to the effects of global warming.
- Two of every 5 people in the world do not have access to basic sanitation services.
- Inadequate water and sanitation contributes to nearly 10 percent of the world’s disease and more than 2 million deaths each year.
- Water scarcity has contributed to political unrest in Sudan and other countries.

Helping other nations is not only the humanitarian thing to do; it is in our national interest. The Water for the World Act will demonstrate our good intentions to the world in tangible, life-saving ways. And it will strengthen global security by defusing tensions that are growing within and among nations as people react to the shortage of clean water and other emerging crises.