To amend the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 with respect to the total amount of Federal assistance for projects in States experiencing severe drought and projects in historically disadvantaged communities, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. Padilla introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on __________

A BILL

To amend the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 with respect to the total amount of Federal assistance for projects in States experiencing severe drought and projects in historically disadvantaged communities, and for other purposes.

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Drought Relief Obtained Using Government Help Today Act of 2024” or the “DROUGHT Act of 2024’’.
SEC. 2. FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOR CERTAIN WATER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS.

Section 5029(b)(9) of the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 (33 U.S.C. 3908(b)(9)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(D) EXCEPTIONS FOR CERTAIN PROJECTS.—

“(i) PROJECTS IN STATES EXPERIENCING SEVERE DROUGHT.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), the Administrator may finance up to 90 percent of the costs of a project described in paragraph (6) or (7) of section 5026 located in—

“(I) a State that has been designated as D2 (severe drought) or greater according to the United States Drought Monitor for a minimum of 4 weeks during any of the 3 years preceding the date on which assistance is provided for the project under this subtitle; or

“(II) a county for which a drought emergency has been declared by the applicable Governor at any time during the 3-year period preceding that date.
“(ii) Projects in historically dis-
advantaged communities.—Notwith-
standing subparagraph (A), the Admin-
istrator may finance up to 90 percent of the
costs of a project described in paragraph
(6) or (7) of section 5026 that serves a
community that—

“(I) is designated as disadvan-
taged, underserved, or financially dis-
tressed by—

“(aa) the Climate and Eco-

demic Justice Screening Tool of
the Council on Environmental
Quality; or

“(bb) the Administrator

pursuant to a water infrastruc-
ture program of the Environ-
mental Protection Agency, in-
cluding water infrastructure
grant programs, clean water and
drinking water grant programs,
and other grant programs under
the Safe Drinking Water Act (42
U.S.C. 300f et seq.) and the Fed-
eral Water Protection Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.); or
“(II) meets the affordability criteria established by a State pursuant to section 1452(d)(3) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j–12(d)(3)) or section 603(i)(2) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1383(i)(2)).
“(iii) PRIORITY.—In carrying out this subparagraph, the Administrator shall prioritize financing for projects that—
“(I) are located in a State that is experiencing severe drought, as described in subclause (I) of clause (i), or a county for which a drought emergency has been declared, as described in subclause (II) of that clause; and
“(II) serve a community that is designated as disadvantaged, underserved, or financially distressed, or meets affordability criteria established by a State, as described in clause (ii).”.