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news release

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

(NR93-007)

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DE LA GARZA ANNOUNCES FEDERAL PROGRAM AVAILABLE TO HELP COLONIA RESIDENTS ACCESS SANITARY WATER SYSTEMS

For immediate release, Wednesday, February 3, 1993

WASHINGTON -- House Agriculture Committee Chairman Kika de la Garza, D-Texas, announced that two new Federal programs are now available to help fund water and wastewater projects to serve colonias and to help low-income residents of these areas install plumbing systems in their homes.

The new programs, administered by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies, are designed to reduce the health risks faced by colonia residents associated with inadequate water and wastewater systems. Rep. de la Garza sponsored the legislation authorizing the assistance programs, and Congress subsequently provided \$25 million in funding in 1992. USDA issued the interim regulations to administer the program on Jan. 22, 1993.

"This program is designed to provide a helping hand to the residents of colonias who cannot afford to install plumbing in their homes. More importantly, it will help reduce the disease risks faced in some colonias lacking sanitary water disposal. I'm proud to have helped win congressional approval for this program, and I will continue to do everything possible to improve living conditions in the colonias," said Rep. de la Garza.

USDA's new water programs for colonias provide the following types of assistance:

- USDA's Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) will offer Federal grants of as much as \$5,000 to eligible low-income colonia residents to install and connect plumbing fixtures. Grants may be used to purchase and install plumbing and related fixtures, such as shower stalls, commodes, sinks and water heaters.
- USDA's Rural Development Administration (RDA) will make available grants to eligible public bodies, non-profit associations and cooperatives for the construction, expansion or improvement of water and wastewater infrastructure, and for residential hook-up assistance.

Applications by individuals or organizations can be made through local FmHA offices (RDA activities are handled through FmHA district and state offices).

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