

January 25, 2017

Dear Representative,

The undersigned groups, and our millions of members and supporters, urge you to oppose any efforts to undermine the Department of the Interior's recently finalized Stream Protection Rule, especially using the Congressional Review Act. This long awaited rule provides local communities with information they desperately need about water pollution caused by nearby coal mining operations, and includes several important protections for clean water and the health of communities surrounding coal mining operations. **Any attack on the safeguards in the Stream Protection Rule is an attack on clean water and should be opposed.**

The Stream Protection Rule is the first major update to surface mining regulations in 30 years. In that time, mountaintop removal mining, one of the most devastating forms of coal mining, has been responsible for destroying an estimated 2,000 miles of streams in Appalachia. Dozens of peer-reviewed scientific studies have linked mountaintop removal mining to poor health outcomes such as elevated birth defects and deaths from cancer.

Communities impacted by coal mining have been waiting for too long for updated rules, which will now provide them with some of the necessary tools to hold coal companies accountable for the toxic contaminants they dump into waterways. In the semi-arid West, coal mining impacts scarce water resources that farmers and ranchers depend on; in Alaska, vital salmon streams are often located in immediate proximity to coal deposits. It is vital that these commonsense, modest protections are kept in place to aid communities from Appalachia to Alaska.

Sector-wide declines in coal prices and bankruptcies have left promised reclamation of land and water unfinished and the health, well being, and economies of local communities in ruins. Competing sources of energy, not environmental regulations, have caused this decline. That is why the Stream Protection Rule is so necessary; it is more important than ever to limit the environmental and health damage that these coal companies leave in their wake. Further, the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement's (OSMRE) analysis of the rule shows it can be implemented with minimal impact on jobs.

Legislation undermining the Stream Protection rule would be a direct attack on ensuring that every community has access to clean, safe water. Furthermore, permanently blocking the rule under the Congressional Review Act and any future "substantially the same" effort by the Department of the Interior is extreme and blocks the agency from doing its basic job of managing and protecting our natural resources. If anything, we need more protections for our vital water resources, not fewer.

For all of the reasons listed above, we urge you to vigorously **oppose any attacks to undermine the Stream Protection Rule.**

Sincerely,

73 National, Regional, State, and Local Groups – see full list on next page

National & Regional Groups

Alliance for Appalachia
American Rivers
Appalachian Mountain Advocates
Appalachian Voices
Center for Biological Diversity
Clean Water Action
Defenders of Wildlife
Earthjustice
Environment America
Environmental Integrity Project
Environmental Law and Policy Center
Environmental Working Group
Family Equality Council
Food & Water Watch
Friends of the Earth
GreenLatinos
League of Conservation Voters
National Parks Conservation Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
Ocean Futures Society
Progressive Congress Action Fund
Public Citizen
Public Justice
Sierra Club
Southern Environmental Law Center
Waterkeeper Alliance
Western Organization of Resource Councils
WildEarth Guardians

Local & State Groups

Alabama Rivers Alliance, *Alabama*
Black Warrior Riverkeeper, *Alabama*
Chuitna Citizens Coalition, *Alaska*
Cook Inletkeeper, *Alaska*
Savannah Riverkeeper, *Georgia & South Carolina*
Canton Area Citizens for Environmental Issues, Canton Lake and Its Watershed, *Illinois*
Citizens Against Longwall Mining, *Illinois*
Citizens Organizing Project, *Illinois*
Committee on the Middle Fork Vermilion River, *Illinois*
Prairie Rivers Network, *Illinois*
Stand Up to Coal, *Illinois*
Valley Watch, Inc., *Indiana*
Iowa Environmental Council, *Iowa*
Appalachian Citizens' Law Center, Inc, *Kentucky*
Kentuckians For The Commonwealth, *Kentucky*
Kentucky Resources Council, Inc., *Kentucky*
Kentucky Waterways Alliance, *Kentucky*
Gulf Restoration Network, *Mississippi*
Missouri Coalition for the Environment, *Missouri*

Northern Plains Resource Council, *Montana*
MountainTrue, *North Carolina*
NC League of Conservation Voters, *North Carolina*
Center for Coalfield Justice, *Pennsylvania*
Citizens Coal Council, *Pennsylvania*
Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future (PennFuture), *Pennsylvania*
Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds, *Pennsylvania*
League of Women Voters Pennsylvania, *Pennsylvania*
Mountain Watershed Association, *Pennsylvania*
Comite Dialogo Ambiental, Inc., *Puerto Rico*
Harpeth River Watershed Association, *Tennessee*
Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment, *Tennessee*
Tennessee Clean Water Network, *Tennessee*
Tennessee Environmental Council, *Tennessee*
Appalachian Faith and Ecology Center, *Virginia*
Potomac Riverkeeper Network, *Virginia*
Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards, *Virginia*
Appalachian Community Health Emergency, *West Virginia*
Coal River Mountain Watch, *West Virginia*
Kanawha Forest Coalition, *West Virginia*
Maria Gunnoe, 2009 Goldman Prize Winner, *West Virginia*
Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, *West Virginia*
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, *West Virginia*
West Virginia Rivers Coalition, *West Virginia*
Clean Wisconsin, *Wisconsin*
Powder River Basin Resource Council, *Wyoming*