

November 29, 2017

The Honorable Lamar Smith  
Chairman  
House Committee on Science, Space,  
and Technology  
2321 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Science, Space,  
and Technology  
2321 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Andy Biggs  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Environment  
House Committee on Science, Space,  
and Technology  
2321 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Environment  
House Committee on Science, Space,  
and Technology  
2321 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**RE: Sixty Groups from Across the Country Urge Support for the Critical Safeguards in the 2015 Clean Water Rule**

Dear Chairman Smith, Chairman Biggs, Ranking Member Johnson, and Ranking Member Bonamici,

In light of the House Science, Space, and Technology Subcommittee on the Environment holding a hearing to discuss “The Future of WOTUS: Examining the Role of States,” we write on behalf of our millions of supporters to express our support of the critical clean water protections laid out in the 2015 Clean Water Rule, and our opposition to rolling back those necessary protections.

The Clean Water Rule, finalized by EPA and Army Corps in 2015, was the result of vigorous public engagement over several years and developed using clear science and legal reasoning. The rulemaking was also a response to a request by stakeholders—ranging from states to regulated dischargers to environmental groups—for more clarity regarding which waterways were protected under the Clean Water Act. The agencies provided ample time for stakeholders to engage in the rulemaking process – they took comments for over 200 days, from April 21 to November 14, 2014, and held over 400 stakeholder meetings across the country. Over one million people have commented in support of the protections laid out in the 2015 Clean Water Rule since it was first proposed in 2014.

Years of scientific review, which included the findings of more than 1,200 peer-reviewed publications, led the agencies to conclude that headwater, seasonal, and rain-dependent streams, along with numerous wetlands and other water bodies, serve critical functions and should be entitled to the protections laid out in the Clean Water Act. Notably, one in three Americans receive drinking water from public water systems that draw supply from the kinds of streams the Clean Water Rule sought to protect. Moreover, wetlands filter pollution from contaminated runoff, recharge groundwater supplies, and store large volumes of flood water. As we have seen

from recent extreme weather events, protecting wetlands, which serve as flood mitigation systems, is critical – 9.6 million homes and \$390 billion in property are located in 15,000 square miles of flood-prone areas. During Hurricane Sandy alone, wetlands avoided \$625 million in direct flood damages.

The Clean Water Rule also supports the outdoor recreation economy. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, Americans spend \$887 billion annually in outdoor recreation, and the outdoor recreation economy is responsible for 7.6 million American jobs. Streams and wetlands, many of which would be protected by the 2015 rule, provide essential fish and wildlife habitat and other recreational opportunities that are crucial for hunters, anglers, paddlers, and hikers, as well as the small businesses they support. Indeed, according to a bipartisan survey, 83 percent of hunters and anglers supported the 2015 Clean Water Rule.

Our country's waterways and the American public have benefitted enormously from the protections laid out in the 1972 Clean Water Act. However, by attacking the Clean Water Rule and attempting to redefine the Waters of the United States to narrow the scope of waters protected, the Trump Administration is defying the intent of the Clean Water Act itself, jeopardizing progress towards achieving more fishable, swimmable, and drinkable water for all Americans.

We thank the committee for its consideration of the views expressed in this letter and urge members to keep in mind the necessary public health and environmental protections laid out in the Clean Water Rule as it is discussed in the hearing today.

Sincerely,

*National Groups*

Alaska Wilderness League  
American Rivers  
American Sustainable Business Council  
Clean Water Action  
Earthjustice  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Environment America  
Hip Hop Caucus  
League of Conservation Voters  
League of United Latin American Citizens  
National Audubon Society  
National Parks Conservation Association  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Physicians for Social Responsibility  
River Network  
Sierra Club  
Voces

### Regional Groups

Connecticut River Conservancy  
John Flannagan Dam Advisory Group  
Tennessee Riverkeeper

### Local/State-Based Groups

Alabama Rivers Alliance, *Alabama*  
Black Warrior Riverkeeper, *Birmingham, Alabama*  
Cahaba River Society, *Birmingham, Alabama*  
Choctawhatchee Riverkeeper, *Troy, Alabama*  
Hurricane Creekkeeper, *Tuscaloosa, Alabama*  
Little River Waterkeeper, *Fort Payne, Alabama*  
One World Adventure Company, *Fort Payne, Alabama*  
Copper River Watershed Project, *Copper River Drainage, Alaska*  
Dry Creek Conservancy, *Sacramento, California*  
Environment Florida, *Florida*  
Florida Wildlife Federation, *Tallahassee, Florida*  
Save the Manatee Club, *Florida*  
Hanalei Watershed Hui, *Hanalei, Hawaii*  
Idaho Conservation League, *Idaho*  
Prairie Rivers Network, *Champaign Illinois*  
Environmental Law & Policy Center, *Chicago, Illinois*  
Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited, *Illinois*  
Maine Rivers, *Maine*  
Massachusetts Rivers Alliance, *Massachusetts*  
Freshwater Future, *Michigan*  
New Hampshire Rivers Council, *New Hampshire*  
Hackensack Riverkeeper, *Hackensack, New Jersey*  
Onondaga Environmental Institute, *Syracuse, New York*  
Groundwork Cincinnati-Mill Creek, *Cincinnati, Ohio*  
Mill Creek Watershed Council of Communities, *Cincinnati, Ohio*  
Ohio Environmental Council, *Columbus, Ohio*  
WaterWatch of Oregon, *Oregon*  
Columbia Riverkeeper, *Hood River, OR/Columbia River Basin*  
Environment Oregon, *Portland, Oregon*  
TN Environmental Council, *Nashville, Tennessee*  
Environment Texas, *Austin, Texas*  
Utah Rivers Council, *Salt Lake City, Utah*  
Friends of the Russell Fork, *Virginia*  
Virginia League of Conservation Voters, *Virginia*  
Virginia Conservation Network, *Virginia*  
Milwaukee Riverkeeper, *Milwaukee, Wisconsin*  
Northwest Watershed Institute, *Washington*  
Puget Soundkeeper Alliance, *Seattle, Washington*  
River Alliance of Wisconsin, *Wisconsin*  
OVEC-Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, *Huntington, West Virginia*