October 17, 2007


Dear Representative:

On the eve of the 35th anniversary of the Clean Water Act, the nation's waters are once again in need of decisive Congressional action. Damaging court decisions and actions by federal agencies are eroding Clean Water Act protections for up to 60 percent of the nation's streams, creeks, and rivers, as well as tens of millions of acres of wetlands.

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters nationwide, we are writing to ask for your vigorous support for the Clean Water Restoration Act of 2007 (H.R. 2421), which will help to ensure clean water for the nation. If you are already a cosponsor of the bill, thank you. If you are not yet a cosponsor, we urge you to add your name to this bill today. Passage of the Clean Water Restoration Act will make certain that the streams, tributaries, wetlands, rivers, lakes, and coastal waters Congress originally intended to be protected from pollution by the 1972 Clean Water Act will remain protected now and for future generations.

The Clean Water Restoration Act will reaffirm the original promises of the Clean Water Act: that all Americans have a right to clean water, and the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of all of the Nation’s waters will be maintained and enhanced. This bill would curb the proliferation of litigation questioning Congress’ original intent by restoring Clean Water Act safeguards to numerous waterbodies left in legal limbo by Supreme Court decisions and further endangered by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) guidance. The legislation does not expand the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act to bodies of water previously unprotected by federal law, nor does it create any new regulatory requirements – it applies to the same water bodies that have been protected by EPA’s and the Corps’ rules for decades.

This bipartisan bill was introduced in May by Representatives Oberstar, Dingell and Ehlers, along with 155 additional Members of Congress. Currently, the bill enjoys support from over 170 cosponsors from both sides of the aisle.

Since the Clean Water Restoration Act’s introduction, two major developments have occurred which provides stronger evidence of the need for this bill. In June, EPA and the Corps issued several new “guidance” documents attempting to explain how the agencies would implement the Supreme Court’s decision in *Rapanos v. United States*. The practical effect of these materials has been to increase confusion and place clean water at greater risk, further demonstrating the need for Congressional action to restore certainty.
In July, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held two full Committee hearings to consider which waters should appropriately be protected by the Clean Water Act. The Committee heard testimony from numerous organizations and individuals who support the Restoration Act, including former EPA administrators, hunter and angler organizations, public officials, scientists and many others.

Tomorrow, October 18, is the 35th anniversary of the Clean Water Act. Supporting the Clean Water Restoration Act is the best opportunity for Congress to honor the legacy of this law – one of the country’s most popular and successful conservation and public health statutes. We urge you to do everything within your means to see that the U.S. House of Representatives passes this bill in the 110th Congress. We look forward to working with you to achieve this goal.

Sincerely,

Joan Mulhern      Jan Goldman-Carter
Senior Legislative Counsel    Wetlands and Water Resources Counsel
Earthjustice National Wildlife Federation

Jon Devine      Steve Moyer
Senior Attorney Vice President of Government Affairs
Natural Resources Defense Council Trout Unlimited

Leah Miller      Joanna Blotner
Director of Watershed Programs Eisendrath Legislative Assistant
Izaak Walton League of America, Inc. Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

Ed Hopkins      Christy Leavitt
Director, Environmental Quality Program Clean Water Advocate
Sierra Club U.S. PIRG

Katherine Baer Jason Rylander
Director, River Advocacy Staff Attorney
American Rivers Defenders of Wildlife

April H. Gromnicki Nat Mund
Director, Ecosystem Restoration Legislative Director
Audubon Southern Environmental Law Center

Natalie Roy Lynn Thorp
Executive Director National Campaigns Coordinator
Clean Water Network Clean Water Action/ Clean Water Fund

Eddie Scher
Communications Director
Waterkeeper Alliance