

February 1, 2018

Re: Conservation groups oppose attacks on clean water safeguards in FY 18 budget negotiations

Dear Senator,

The undersigned conservation and sportsmen's organizations urge you to oppose the inclusion of harmful Clean Water Act-related riders in a final spending package for Fiscal Year 2018. In particular, the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill released in November 2017 includes three policy riders that would undermine Clean Water Act protections for streams and wetlands nationwide:

- Section 424 would allow polluters to more easily dump dredged or fill material into our streams and wetlands, destroying fish and wildlife habitat and flood storage capacity and degrading water quality downstream.
- Section 433 would resurrect the Yazoo Backwater Pumps Project in Mississippi, essentially reversing the Bush administration's "veto" of this project and would lead to the unacceptable damage of 200,000 acres of ecologically-rich wetlands.
- Section 434 is particularly pernicious. It attempts to cut out the public's ability to have a voice in the actions of their government, encouraging the agencies to ignore Clean Water Act and Administrative Procedure Act requirements that they meaningfully consider public comment. It could also interfere with the courts' ability to review if the repeal is "arbitrary or capricious."

This Clean Water Rule rider is not only irresponsible; it is downright undemocratic. Any Clean Water Rule rider that allows the federal government to sidestep the Administrative Procedure Act would be completely unjustified. Changing the rules to enhance the prospects for a measure designed to weaken the nation's premier clean water law is a disturbing tactic. There should be no place in a funding bill for a rider that would allow the administration to avoid public comment as it takes steps to lift protections for our nation's water that provide fish and wildlife habitat and deliver clean drinking water supplies.

Our organizations and other partner groups have repeatedly expressed our support for the Clean Water Rule and urged Administrator Pruitt not to repeal it. We have filed extensive public comments. We have filed an amicus brief. We have communicated our concerns to our members of congress, including the leaders of the Senate Appropriations Committee. We support this rule because it conserves our nation's critical headwater streams, shields communities from flooding, supplies drinking water to one in three Americans, and provides essential fish and wildlife habitat that supports a \$887 billion outdoor recreation economy. We expect our voices to be heard in accordance with the law.

We urge you to reject all policy riders attacking safeguards for the streams, wetlands, lakes, and rivers that our families, communities, and economy depend on. We thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts regarding possible Clean Water Act riders. We look forward to working

with you to ensure that conservationists have a voice in shaping the future of our nation's water resources.

Sincerely,

Adams County Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Albemarle Angler  
Allegheny Mountain Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Arizona Wildlife Federation  
Arkansas Wildlife Federation  
Association of Northwest Steelheaders  
Bitterroot River Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Brodhead Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Clark Fork Coalition  
Columbia County Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Conservation Federation of Missouri  
Delaware Nature Society  
Donegal Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Environmental Advocates of New York  
Flathead Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Florida Wildlife Federation  
Fly Fishers International  
Forbes Trail Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Forks of the Delaware Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Fort Bedford Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
George Grant Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
God's County Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Great Rivers Habitat Alliance  
Hokendauqua Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Indiana Wildlife Federation  
Iron Furnace Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Izaak Walton League of America  
Joe Brooks Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Lewis and Clark Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Louisiana Wildlife Federation  
Madison-Gallatin Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Magic City Flyfishers Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Monocacy Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Montana Audubon  
Montana Trout Unlimited  
Montana Wildlife Federation  
National Wildlife Federation  
Nebraska Wildlife Federation  
Neshannock Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Pat Barnes Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
PennFuture

Penns Creek Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Seneca Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Shehawken Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Snowy Mountain Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
South Dakota Wildlife Federation  
Trout Unlimited  
Valley Forge Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Virgin Island Conservation Society  
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation  
West Virginia Rivers Coalition  
WestSlope Chapter of Trout Unlimited