

Legislation Text

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Urging the President of the United States to Affirm the “Clean Water Rule”.

WHEREAS, On February 28, 2017, President Donald Trump signed an executive order to repeal the Clean Water Rule, also known as the Waters of the United States Rule. The Clean Water Rule is aimed at protecting the nation’s rivers, streams and wetlands from pollution by placing them under the purview of the federal Clean Water Act; and

WHEREAS, The Clean Water Rule was an effort by the Obama Administration in 2015, that outlined which bodies of water would be automatically protected by the Clean Water Act, including large bodies like lakes, rivers, streams, ponds, and other smaller features that have connections to bigger, navigable waterways. The Clean Water Rule protects approximately two million miles of streams and 20 million acres of wetlands <<https://thinkprogress.org/senate-defeats-a-bill-that-would-have-removed-millions-of-miles-of-streams-from-federal-protection-bb02f15a4125>> in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Under the Obama Administration, the Clean Water Rule was the result of more than 400 stakeholder meetings, more than one million public comments, and more than 1,200 peer-reviewed scientific publications which showed that the small streams and wetlands that the Clean Water Rule is meant to protect are vital to larger downstream waterways like the Delaware and the Susquehanna; and

WHEREAS, According to the Environmental Working Group, the repeal of the Clean Water Rule could threaten the drinking water of 117 million Americans. More than one-third of Americans get at least some of their drinking water from small streams and more than 72 million Americans rely on small streams for more than half of their water. In 21 different states, small streams were found to provide drinking water for one million or more people. More than five million people in Pennsylvania, New York and Texas get drinking water from small streams, as do more than three million people in Arizona, California, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina and Ohio; and

WHEREAS, Repealing the Clean Water Rule would have far-reaching detrimental effects for Pennsylvania's rivers and streams. Approximately, 50,000 miles of streams in Pennsylvania would lose critical protections from encroaching development, fracking and other industrial threats, and increased pollution; and

WHEREAS, The repeal of the Clean Water Rule will have a particularly negative effect on certain endangered species because millions of acres of wetlands would no longer be under the protection of the Clean Water Act from pollution and industrial threats. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”), wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems on Earth. One-third of the United States’ threatened and endangered species live only in wetlands; and

WHEREAS, Water pollution directly impacts public health. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, water pollutants can negatively affect crop production and the health of seafood and livestock that humans consume. Persistent pollutants stay active for a long time and accumulate as they move up the food chain; and

WHEREAS, The EPA previously supported the notion that clean water is necessary for industry and business. Tourism, fishing, farming, recreation, energy production, manufacturing and other industries depend on clean water, while adding billions of dollars to our economy every year. The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership supports the Clean Water Rule by claiming that “the health of fish and wildlife habitat is the infrastructure of an outdoor recreation industry that fuels \$646 billion in annual spending and supports more than six million American jobs”; and

WHEREAS, Repealing the Clean Water Rule would impact Americans from all walks of life. Communities whose water systems lack the resources to deal with polluted sources are predominantly reliant on federal protections for our streams. It is imperative that we uphold protections for our streams and wetlands as they are essential to our clean drinking water supplies, healthy sustainable communities, and a strong economy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Does hereby urge the President of the United States to affirm the “Clean Water Rule”.