

July 14, 2015

U.S. Congress
Washington, DC

Dear Member of Congress:

As communities of faith across a broad spectrum of traditions, we understand water as a symbol of preservation, cleansing, and renewal. We have been called to be stewards of God's great creation and protecting the gift of clean water is an important act of stewardship. Because water is such an integral part of our physical and spiritual wellbeing, we are writing to urge you to protect the Clean Water Rule that was finalized in May.

The Clean Water Rule provides protection of wetlands and seasonal streams under the Clean Water Act and ensures clean water and safe drinking water for our families and communities. These new guidelines under the Clean Water Act will help protect waterways and human health.

Since the Supreme Court's *SWANCC* decision in 2001 and its *Rapanos* decision in 2006, more than 20 million acres of wetlands and tens of thousands of miles of streams have been at risk of losing protections under the Clean Water Act. The confusing nature of these decisions, coupled with weak guidance given to regulators, has allowed the pollution and destruction of seasonal wetlands and intermittent streams throughout the country, with many more at risk.

With the Clean Water Rule, we can now rectify this growing problem by establishing criteria for protecting these at-risk waters, which provide critical environmental, economic, public health, and other benefits. The Clean Water Rule will protect the drinking water of one in three people living in the U.S.; without this rule the drinking water of 117 million people will be at risk.

In addition to our call to be faithful stewards of the earth, our faith traditions teach us to care for vulnerable populations including communities of color and low-income communities. The Clean Water Rule will protect waters in communities that have significant populations of African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanic, and low-income families.

We ask you to support the Clean Water Rule and help ensure safe, clean drinking water for communities across the U.S.

Sincerely,

Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
Creation Justice Ministries

The Episcopal Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Maryknoll Sisters Eastern Region, USA
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas' Institute Justice Team
The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society