

February 2, 2017

Dear Member of Congress:

As communities of faith, we recognize that water is a fundamental component of all life, and that stewardship of water is part of our call to care for God's creation. Because water is such an integral part of our physical and spiritual wellbeing, we are writing to oppose any efforts, including the Congressional Review Act, to undermine the Department of Interior's recently finalized Stream Protection Rule.

The Stream Protection Rule, which is the first major update to surface mining regulations in 30 years, provides local communities with information they desperately need about water pollution caused by nearby coal mining operations, and includes several important protections for clean water and the health of communities surrounding coal mining operations. This rule will address mountaintop removal mining, which has been responsible for destroying an estimated 2,000 miles of streams in Appalachia.

The faith community is dedicated to protecting God's creation and being good stewards of the gift of water. Any attack on the safeguards in the Stream Protection Rule is an attack on clean water and should be opposed.

Undermining the Stream Protection rule would be a direct attack on ensuring that communities have access to clean, safe water. Permanently blocking the rule under the Congressional Review Act would severely limit the Department of Interior's ability for any future rule that is "substantially the same" and blocks the agency from doing its basic job of managing and protecting God's creation.

As communities of faith across a broad spectrum of traditions, we understand water as a symbol of preservation, cleansing, and renewal. Water is a gift from God. We urge you to oppose any attacks to undermine the Stream Protection Rule so that we can protect this gift for the health and wellbeing of current and future generations as well as all creation.

Sincerely,

Creation Justice Ministries

Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life

Earth Ministry

Eco-Justice Ministries

Franciscan Action Network

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States

The United Methodist Church-General Board of Church and Society