

July 14, 2015

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

As faith leaders 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. We commend the Environmental Protection Agency for their leadership in drafting new guidelines under the Clean Water Act. The Clean Water Rule, finalized in May, 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.

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 gifts of clean water is an important act of stewardship. The Clean Water Rule will protect the drinking water of one in three Americans; without this rule the drinking water of 117 million Americans 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.

Because water is such an integral part of our physical and spiritual wellbeing and helps provide clean drinking water for all communities, we urge you to continue to protect our nation's clean water.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Dr. Jonathan Barton  
*General Minister, Virginia Council of Churches*

The Rev. Dr. John D. Copenhaver,  
*Prof. Emeritus of Religion and Philosophy, Shenandoah University*

The Rev. Charles Swadley  
*Interim CEO, Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy*

The Rev. Kathy Dwyer  
*Rockspring Congregational United Church of Christ – Arlington*

Rev. Kathleen Haynes  
*Pastor, Mt. Olive United Methodist Church & Shiloh United Methodist Church – Strasburg*

Rev. Charles Grant, D.Min.  
*Interim Pastor, Westminster Presbyterian Church – Charlottesville*  
The Rev. Daniel Vélez-Rivera  
*Vicar, St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church – Leesburg*

The Rev. David M. Hindman  
*Pastor, Duncan Memorial United Methodist Church – Ashland*

The Rev. Dr. Judith E. Thomson  
*Associate Pastor, St. Andrews Presbyterian Church – Kilmarnock*

The Rev. Dr. Verne E. Arens  
*Retired Sr. Pastor of Little River United Church of Christ – Annandale*

The Rev. Dr. Linda J. Dickerson  
*Northside Presbyterian Church – Blacksburg*

The Rev. Dr. Carroll A. Baltimore  
*Bishop Designate, United Global Fellowship, Alexandria*

Rev. Richard A. Giessler  
*Floyd County*

Rev. Howard John Wesley  
*Alfred Street Baptist, Alexandria*

Rev. Reginald C. Woodhouse  
*First Baptist-Jefferson Park, Newport News*

Rev. Alvin Edwards  
*Mt Zion African Baptist, Charlottesville*

Rev. Leonard N. Smith  
*Mt Zion Baptist, Arlington*

Rev. Geoffrey V. Guns  
*Second Calvary, Norfolk*

Rev. Robert G. Murray  
*First Baptist, Norfolk*

Rev. Marvin Slade  
*Evangelical Holiness, Axton*

Rev. Raymond C. Ramsey  
*Greater Mt Parrish Baptist, Penhook*

Rev. Thurman O. Echols, Jr.  
*Moral Hill MBC, Axton*

Pastor Eugene Ramos, Sr.  
*Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Martinsville*

Rev. George G. Reynolds  
*Mt Lebanon Baptist, Danville*

Rev. Eric F. Hairston  
*Pilgrim MBC, Martinsville*

Rev. Ruben H. Martin  
*Charity Christian Church, Martinsville*

Rev. Kenneth Davis  
*Mt. Olive East Christian, Martinsville*

Rev. Billy B. Cherry, Jr.  
*St. Paul CME Church, Norfolk*

Rev. Tyrone Nelson  
*Mt Zion Baptist, Richmond*

Rev. William Chatman  
*Little Zion MBC, Chesapeake*

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*cc: Members of Congress*