

April 15, 2019

Administrator Andrew Wheeler
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Wheeler:

As faith organizations across a broad spectrum of religious traditions, we understand water as a symbol of preservation, cleansing and renewal. We believe that water is a gift from God and needs to be protected.

The faith community has worked diligently to advocate for clean water protection over the years. We have done this with the understanding that we must protect God's waters as well as the human health and wellbeing that is tied to water protection. Religious leaders in states across the United States have written letters to the U.S. Congress and multiple Administrations on the need to support clean water through funding and public policy. In addition, both state and national faith organizations have called upon policymakers to join the faith community in protecting clean water and thus the public health. Of particular note, the faith community participated in the 2015 Clean Water Rule process, which included more than 400 meetings with stakeholders and more than 1 million public comments.

The recently released Waters of the United States Rulemaking, which rollbacks protections in the 2015 Clean Water Rule, is not in line with the call to safeguard clean water. This new rule would remove protections for streams that provide drinking water to tens of millions of people, including vulnerable populations such as children.

For more than four decades, the Clean Water Act has helped protect water bodies and waterways so that they can provide clean drinking water and be safe for swimming and fishing. The 2015 Clean Water Rule, which clarified what waterways and water bodies were covered by the Clean Water Act, was instrumental in protecting human health and God's creation. Stripping any of the protections provided under the 2015 Clean Water Rule only puts human health and the rest of God's creation at risk.

We oppose the new Waters of the United States Rulemaking because it will put the health and safety of one-third of Americans in jeopardy. We urge you to withdraw this rule and instead

embrace EPA's stated mission to protect human health and the environment so that our communities and all of creation can have clean water.

Sincerely,

Disciples Center for Public Witness
Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
Creation Justice Ministries
Franciscan Action Network
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Presbyterian Church USA, Office of Public Witness
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas' Institute Justice Team
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
Union for Reform Judaism