

September 17, 2017

Administrator Scott Pruitt
Deputy Assistant Secretary Lamont
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

RE: Waters of the United States Rule, Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2017-0203

Dear Administrator Pruitt and Mr. Lamont:

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.

In 2015, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps adopted the Clean Water Rule to eliminate confusion on which water bodies were protected under the Clean Water Act. A significant number of faith communities participated in the rulemaking process in 2014 order to ensure that God's waters were as fully protected as possible.

The Clean Water Rule, finalized in 2015 under the Clean Water Act, clarifies what waterways are protected and helps safeguard habitat for fish and wildlife. Without the Clean Water Rule, more than 117 million people in the US are at risk from pollution.

The EPA ensured that 20 million acres of wetlands and tens of thousands of miles of streams are protected under the Clean Water Rule. The EPA took years to craft the Clean Water Rule, held more than 400 meetings with stakeholders and received more than 1 million public comments, including a significant number of comments from the faith community.

Because water is such an integral part of our physical and spiritual wellbeing, we urge you to leave the current Waters of the United States rule in place. Eliminating this important rule would put vital parts of God's creation at risk. Everyone has a right to clean water.

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

Sincerely,

Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life
Creation Justice Ministries

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Franciscan Action Network

Interfaith Power and Light

Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Union for Reform Judaism

The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society