January 5, 2025
RE: Docket ID Number EPA-HQ-OW-2025-0322

Administrator Zeldin,

As faith-based organizations and religious institutions unified in our commitment to promoting life, justice, and responsible stewardship of God's creation, we write in firm opposition to the proposed rule to alter the definition of the "Waters of the United States."

Each of our diverse faith traditions recognize the fundamental truth that all of life is interconnected — from the smallest stream to the largest ocean; from the pollution-filtering wetlands to the water running out of our taps. Our faith tells us that the spiritual and physical wellbeing of humans is intimately tied to the wellbeing of all of God's creation. When one part of God's creation is disrespected, harmed, or destroyed, there is a rippling effect which impacts us all.

The proposed rule disregards the reality of our interconnectedness. By proposing to adopt an unnecessarily limiting definition of the waters of the United States, EPA is stripping away basic safeguards for a large majority of our nation's streams and wetlands. This rule could result in the loss of up to 80 percent of wetlands nationwide. It will create regulatory uncertainty and remove requirements for polluters to treat waste, manage runoff, or prevent contamination.

Wetlands filter pollution, recharge groundwater, protect wildlife habitat, and reduce flooding. The proposed rule not only removes protections from God's treasured waters and waterways, it also gives little to no attention to the resulting impacts on health, water quality, and flood prevention. Communities will be left to suffer with increased costs for local water treatment, damage from flooding, and the resulting higher taxes, insurance premiums, or both. As is too often the case, it is low-income, marginalized communities who will bear these burdens first and worst.

In honor of our sacred interconnectedness, God the Creator of all life, and the health and wellbeing of our communities, we urge EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers to not approve this rule, and cease the dismantling of fundamental environmental protections.

Sincerely,

Anabaptist Climate Collaborative
Aytzim: Ecological Judaism
Bronx Jews for Climate Action
California Interfaith Power & Light
Catholic Climate Covenant
Creation Care Partners, Inc.
Creation Justice Ministries
Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action
Franciscan Action Network

Jewish Earth Alliance- PA
Kentucky Interfaith Power & Light
Laudato Si Movement
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
National Religious Partnership for the Environment
Nebraska Interfaith Power and Light
New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light
Repair the Sea - Tikkun HaYam
School Sisters of Notre Dame, Central Pacific Province
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Tikkun Olam Committee of the Aquarian Minyan
Union for Reform Judaism