



ENVIRONMENTAL LAW & POLICY CENTER

Testimony of Nancy Stoner
Senior Attorney, ELPC
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I'm Nancy Stoner, a Senior Attorney at the Environmental Law and Policy Center, a nonprofit that protects public health and natural resources of nine states in the Midwest, including the Great Lakes. I have been working on clean water issues since October of 1987 and twice served at the U.S. EPA.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in opposition to US EPA's and the Army Corp's proposed regulation to take away the Clean Water Act protections that Americans have relied upon to protect their rivers, lakes, and wetlands since 1972. The Clean Water Act is one of the nation's most effective statutes for ensuring that Americans have safe, clean water to drink, to swim in, to fish, and to enjoy. The nation's waters, including the Great Lakes, have dramatically improved since 1972. The Clean Water Act is one of the most popular laws in the US. In poll after poll, 90% of Americans or more want more protection for US rivers, lakes, and wetlands, not less.

Under the proposed rule, more than 80% of wetlands in the contiguous United States and at least 5 million miles of streams would lose federal protection. Such a sweeping rollback is inconsistent with decades of scientific evidence demonstrating the essential roles that streams and wetlands play in maintaining water quality, recharging groundwater, reducing flooding, supporting wildlife, and sustaining communities. The result will be more pollution, more flooding, most costly and contaminated tap water, fewer ducks, fewer fish to catch, and the loss of the beauty of America's wonderful water resources.

Since this proposal is being put forth by US EPA and the Army Corps, agencies charged with protecting the waters of the United States, you might think that it is designed to provide better protection to our nation's waters. But it isn't. It is designed to make it easier and cheaper for polluters to pollute. And if it weren't already clear that it was written with the interests of polluters in mind – not the interests of the American public – the proposal makes that even clearer by calculating the cost savings to polluters as the justification for the proposed rule and not even attempting to determine how the rule will adversely impact the public. You heard that right – the proposal does not answer any of these questions:

How will this proposal affect the safety of tap water?
How will it affect water quality at America's beaches?
How will it affect the safety of eating fish caught in America's rivers?
How will it affect flooding in America's cities, towns, and rural communities?
How will it affect the availability of clean irrigation water for America's farmers?
How will it affect the number of waterfowl in America's wetlands?
How will it affect the availability of safe well water for Americans to drink?

HQ: 35 East Wacker Drive | Suite 1600 | Chicago, IL 60601
ELPC.org | (312) 673-6500

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I could go on and on, but my time is up. Americans don't want less protection for their wetlands, rivers, and lakes, and didn't vote for more water pollution or for EPA or the Corps to stop doing their jobs. EPA and the Corps should withdraw this proposed rule now. Thank you, especially the EPA career staff who serve the American public.

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