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Here's What They're Saying About the Clean Water Act Proposed Rule

WASHINGTON -- Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released a proposed rule to clarify protection under the Clean Water Act for streams and wetlands, benefitting families who rely on safe places to swim and healthy fish to eat, farmers who need reliable sources of water to grow their crops, hunters and fishermen who depend on healthy waters for recreation and work, and businesses that need a steady supply of water for operations. Streams and wetlands provide many benefits to communities, including trapping floodwaters, recharging groundwater supplies, removing pollution, and increasing economic vitality because of their role in fishing, hunting, agriculture, recreation, energy, and manufacturing.

Here's what folks are saying about the proposed rule:

American Sustainable Business Council (ASBC) | Richard Eidlin, Co-founder and Policy Director
"American business has always depended on the availability of clean water for its success, and EPA's regulation in this area historically has been a prime example of the vital partnership between business and government. Whether a company is a food producer, a high tech manufacturer of silicon wafers, outdoor recreation guide or a beer manufacturer, businesses rely on clean water to produce high quality and safe products. Ever since the passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972, the EPA has been charged with ensuring that our water supply remains safe. Today, we applaud the EPA for taking steps to clarify that small streams, wetlands and other tributaries are protected by the Act. Degradation and loss of wetlands or small streams can increase the risk of floods there by threatening businesses."

ASBC member businesses and partners also commented on the proposed new rule.
"On behalf of the employee owners at New Belgium Brewing and our Alternatively Empowered culture, we offer a toast to 40 great years of the Clean Water Act and to the EPA and Obama Administration's leadership to make sure our water -- and our beer -- continues to be of the highest quality. We are thrilled for these incremental protections announced today that will help improve whole system watershed health," said Andrew Lemley, Government Relations Director for New **Belgium Brewing Company**, Fort Collins, CO.

"As a small business owner who personally experienced the negative economic impact of a recent chemical spill in West Virginia's Elk River, I know how crucial it is for strengthening EPA regulations to protect our waterways," said Nancy Ward, CEO, **Cornucopia**, Charleston, WV.

"Water is quite literally the main ingredient for the foods we eat, and it is also central to the daily operations of our business. Clean and protected water thus couldn't be more important to King Arthur Flour and our commitment to healthy foods and a healthy planet," said Suzanne McDowell, VP of Human Resources, **King Arthur Flour Company**, Norwich, VT.

"Protection of small streams and wetlands is critical for maintaining the health of our food supply,

communities, and businesses dependent on clean water. Used for livestock and crop irrigation upstream, and in food production, breweries, home kitchens and restaurants further down, the incalculable economic and social value of unpolluted water requires more than adequate safeguards and protections for a strong economy," said Hilary Baum, Director, **Chefs for the Marcellus**, a campaign of food producers and businesses dedicated to protecting NYC's regional foodshed. [Press Release, 3/25/2014]

National Farmers Union | Chandler Goule, National Farmers Union (NFU) senior vice president of programs
"NFU has long advocated for increased certainty surrounding Clean Water Act requirements for family farmers and ranchers in the wake of complicating Supreme Court decisions. Today's draft rule clarifies Clean Water Act jurisdiction, maintains existing agricultural exemptions and adds new exemptions, and encourages enrollment in U.S. Department of Agriculture conservation programs. In addition, farmers and ranchers who are voluntarily enacting certain conservation practices on their farms will be exempt from Clean Water Act Section 404 permitting requirements. Today's ag-friendly announcement clearly indicates that NFU and other agricultural stakeholders made their voices heard, and EPA took notice." [Press Release, 3/25/2014]

Natural Resources Defense Council | Peter Lehner, Executive Director
"This is good news for boaters, anglers, swimmers and families who rely on clean drinking water. EPA took an important step to finally rescue these waters from legal limbo. Even though these are common-sense protections, the polluters are sure to attack them. People who care about clean water need to make their voices heard in the comment period." [Press Release, 3/25/2014]
NRDC Blogs by Peter Lehner, Karen Hobbs & Jon Devine

North Carolina Wildlife Federation | Tim Gestwicki, CEO
"This is a huge step forward for protecting our waters and wildlife. We simply cannot protect our rivers, lakes, and bays without protecting the many small streams and wetlands that feed into them. The proposal clarifies which waters are—and which are not—protected by the Clean Water Act. It will protect many streams and wetlands that are currently in legal limbo. The rule also specifically excludes many man-made ditches, ponds, and irrigation systems and honors the law's current exemptions for normal farming, ranching, and forestry practices." From mountain trout anglers, to piedmont bass enthusiasts and duck hunters in eastern NC, this is a critical step towards protecting our sporting heritage and our outdoor future." [Press Release, 3/24/2014]

Center for Rural Affairs| John Crabtree, CEO
"The proposed rule is a commonsense effort to clear the regulatory waters, protect the quality of the nation's surface waters, and provide an environment in which economically vital activities such as hunting, fishing and birding as well as farming and ranching can both thrive and contribute to a better quality of life and safer drinking water for those of us that live here, and also for our neighbors downstream." [Press Release, 3/25/2014]

Izaak Walton League | Scott Kovarovics, Executive Director
"The Corps and EPA are proposing balanced, science-based policy to restore essential protections for streams, wetlands, and other waters. The proposal will better protect streams that provide drinking water to 117 million people and help conserve streams and wetlands that are vital to a vibrant outdoor recreation economy." [Press Release, 3/25/2014]

Ducks Unlimited | Dale Hall, CEO
"The release of the draft rule gets us one step closer to better defining Clean Water Act regulations in regard to wetlands. We are also pleased with the open process EPA has adopted, which invites the public, Congress and all interested parties to participate in the discussion. EPA's draft science report last year showed many categories of wetlands, including prairie potholes, may be geographically isolated but are still connected to, and have a significant impact on, downstream waters."[Press Release, 3/25/2014]

Trout Unlimited| Chris Wood, President and CEO
"Today's proposal speaks to the heart of the Clean Water Act—making rivers more fishable and

swimmable. The waters affected by today's proposal provide vital spawning and rearing habitat for trout and salmon. Simply stated, the proposal will make fishing better, and anglers should support it. Restoring protections to these waters ensures healthy habitat for fish and a bright future for anglers."[Press Release, Blog, 3/25/2014]

Environment America| Margie Alt, Executive Director
"Whether we look back to the recent spill in West Virginia that left 300,000 people without drinking water or ahead to the dead zones that will blight Lake Erie and the Chesapeake Bay this summer, it's obvious that our waterways are not as clean or safe as we need them to be – for our drinking water, for recreation, or for the health of our ecosystems and wildlife. Today's action by the EPA will help ensure that all our waterways get the protection they need so we can enjoy them for years to come. When finalized, this rule will be the biggest step forward for clean water in more than a decade." [Press Release, 3/25/2014]

American Rivers | Bob Irvin, President of American Rivers
"What happens in small streams and wetlands upstream affects the health of our rivers and the communities that depend upon them downstream. The proposed rule released today by the Environmental Protection Agency relies on sound science to clarify the scope of protections under the Clean Water Act for these critical upstream waters that contribute to our drinking water supplies and protect us from flooding. This is an important step forward to better protect and restore our nation's rivers." [Press Release, 3/25/2014]

Clean Water Action| Bob Wendelgass, Clean Water Action President and CEO
"These small streams are critical to the health of drinking water sources for nearly one third of all Americans. The rule proposed today is clear, concise, and well supported by both the law and science. It's long overdue - Congress protected these vital resources when the landmark Clean Water Act passed in 1972 and these protections were wrongly revoked 12 years ago. This proposal, when finalized, will go a long way toward restoring protections and reflecting the way that water works in the real world." [Press Release, 3/25/2014]

League of Conservation Voters | President Gene Karpinski, CEO
"This is an important step forward for restoring the true scope of the Clean Water Act and protecting our nation's waterways. This rule will protect vital streams and wetlands that provide drinking water for over 117 million Americans, filter pollution, and reduce the impacts of flooding and erosion." [Press Release, 3/25/2014]

Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership | Whit Fosburgh TRCP President and CEO
"Several leading sportsmen's organizations – the American Fly Fishing Trade Association, Berkley Conservation Institute, Izaak Walton League of America, National Wildlife Federation, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Trout Unlimited and Wildlife Management Institute – applauded the release of the proposed rule, saying that it would better protect important habitats for fish and wildlife. We are pleased the administration has taken this crucial step to provide clarity and certainty to landowners, conservationists and businesses regarding waters of the United States. Long overdue, this action restores some – but not all – Clean Water Act protections to these critical resources, conserving healthy habitat, upholding water quality and supporting the sporting traditions that tens of millions of Americans enjoy." [Press Release, 3/25/2014]

Clean Water Action | Minnesota Center For Environmental Advocacy Minnesota Conservation Federation | Minnesota Trout Unlimited | Izaak Walton League | Minnesota Environmental Partnership
"State conservation groups strongly support a new federal rule, announced today by the Obama Administration, which aims to better protect U.S. waters from pollution and destruction, including those in Minnesota. This rule will benefit millions of people across the country and in Minnesota. The rule removes confusion over which streams and wetlands are covered by the Clean Water Act due to polluter friendly court decisions and subsequent Bush administration policies. It's good for our environment, economy, and quality of life." [Press Release, 3/25/2014]

Conservation Federation of Missouri/National Wildlife Federation | Larry Schweiger, the National Wildlife Federation's President and Chief Executive Officer
"This is a huge step forward for protecting America's waters and wildlife. You cannot tear out a tree's fine roots and expect it to survive. The streams and wetlands protected by this rule supply drinking water to more than one-third of all Americans. Our rivers, lakes, and bays will be cleaner and healthier once this rule becomes the law of the land. "This proposal clarifies which waters are-and which are not-protected by the Clean Water Act. It will protect streams and wetlands that are currently in legal limbo. The rule also specifically excludes many man-made ditches, ponds, and irrigation systems and honors the law's current exemptions for normal farming, ranching, and forestry practices. "Our only disappointment is that the proposal stops short of restoring full protections for many wetlands important for wildlife, such as prairie potholes, Carolina bays, vernal pools, and playa lakes. We look forward to making the legal and scientific case for protecting these waters during the comment period to come." [Press Release, 3/25/2014]

Outdoor Alliance member American Whitewater | National Stewardship Director Kevin Colburn
"The recreational, ecological, and economic benefits of clarifying Clean Water Act protection for headwater streams are enormous. The new rule will protect the quality of water in our taps, flowing through our communities, and under our boats. The nation's headwater rivers and streams are particularly important in providing clean cold drinking water for millions of Americans. These same streams offer world-class recreation opportunities that improve the quality of life and economic viability for countless communities."
[Press Release, 3/25/2014]

Evangelical Environmental Network | Rev. Mitch Hescox President & CEO
"We are thankful that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the EPA have worked together to propose a new rule that clarifies the protection needed to ensure pure water, defend our children's health, and codify exemptions that have long applied to farmers. There are simply too many stories like a crude oil spill in Texas that fouled drinking water, 5000 gallons of oil spilled into a stream in Denver, or livestock waste in Georgia polluting a local lake. Each of the above and many more were never enforced because of confusion created." [Press Release, 3/25/2014]

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