



**218 D Street SE, Washington DC, 20003
202-547-H208 [4208], www.cleanwaternetnetwork.org**

July 28, 2011

Dear Senator:

Americans know that clean water is essential not just for public health, but for a strong economy. Polluted rivers do not supply clean drinking water, build civic pride, attract the best employees, or encourage investment. Clean water is a fundamental element of any economy, whether it is used in food processing, manufacturing or at the kitchen table in every American's home. It is essential to fishing, hunting, swimming, and boating.

The constituents in your state depend on the Clean Water Act and other landmark environmental statutes to protect the health, safety and economy of their communities. Sadly, there is a crop of bad bills and pro-polluter appropriation riders currently being considered by Congress that would reverse nearly 40 years of water quality protections and send us back to the days when raw sewage and toxic chemicals were dumped untreated into rivers and lakes. Your constituents deserve better. America deserves better.

On behalf of the Clean Water Network and the 280 national, regional, state and local organizations signed below, along with 75 concerned citizens from around the country, several of whom are small business owners, **we urge you to vote NO to ALL of the misguided and dangerous bills and riders that are part of this dirty water crusade.**

Top on the polluters' wish list is the so-called *Clean Water Cooperative Federalism Act of 2011* (H.R. 2018) which passed the House on July 13th, without any legislative hearings. This bill would strip away long-standing protections provided by the Clean Water Act.

H.R. 2018 attacks the heart of the Clean Water Act and would shred this federal safety net by preventing the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from ensuring adequate water quality standards to protect public health and the environment. This federal role is necessary to ensure that states do not give a pass to polluters at the expense of their downstream or adjacent neighbors. There is no state in the lower 48 that does not share a body of water with a neighbor. That fact alone should shut down debate. Americans need a minimum level of clean water and safe drinking water regardless of which state they live in. H.R. 2018 would force states into a race to the bottom.

In addition to crippling EPA's ability to set a minimum "floor" for a state's water quality standards, H.R. 2018 would make America's water dirtier by handcuffing the EPA's oversight of discharges of dredged or fill material, which pollute the nation's



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waters. **H.R. 2018 proponents claim that they are merely “reining in” EPA’s oversight, but the fact is that in 40 years, EPA has only exerted its oversight authority to veto projects 13 times, compared with over two million discharge permits that were approved by the Army Corps of Engineers.** That’s a veto rate significantly less than half of one percent. The Agency has only used this authority sparingly to stop the most egregious of projects that would have a devastating and irreversible impact on critical resources and the environment.

A vote in support of H.R. 2018 and for any of the numerous dirty water bills and riders on appropriations bills is a vote for dirty water, plain and simple. This concerted effort by polluters is an attack both on our nation’s public health and economy.

We urge you to vote NO on H.R. 2018 and to oppose ALL other dirty water bills and riders that come before the Senate for action. These bills strip away the long-standing environmental protections our country depends on to survive and prosper.

Sincerely,

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Executive Director
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Clean Water Network is a coalition of more than 1,200 organizations from across the country, representing more than 5 million people working together to protect our nation's precious water resources.