

Scientists Support the Clean Water Restoration Act

February 25, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As professional scientists and engineers, including many members of the National Academy of Sciences, we write to applaud your commitment to restoring science to its rightful place and to utilizing the best available science to protect public health and the environment.

As national experts in water and ecosystem science, we ask you to call on Congress to pass the Clean Water Restoration Act as quickly as possible to ensure that the best available science can once again guide protection of our Nation's waters. This legislation is urgently needed to ensure that Clean Water Act protections are provided to the nation's vast array of headwater streams and wetlands; waters that are critical for clean drinking water, public safety, and fish and wildlife habitat.

Many small streams and wetlands have already lost Clean Water Act protections due to recent Supreme Court decisions that called into question the scientific relationship between these waters and larger navigable rivers downstream. We can say with certainty, however, that there is no scientific dispute about this relationship. Long-standing and robust scientific evidence demonstrates that these waters are interconnected and that small streams and wetlands are essential to the health of downstream waters. We cannot protect our mighty rivers unless we also protect our vast array of small streams and wetlands. It is equally clear that they must be protected if we are to achieve the Clean Water Act's goals of restoring and maintaining the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters.

Congress recognized this interconnectedness, and effectively married sound science to the law, when it passed the Clean Water Act with the intent of protecting all of the Nation's waters. That long and successful union is now broken, but as scientists we know it must be restored.

The more than 160 undersigned scientists respectfully request that you take a vital leadership role on this issue, and advise Congress of your strong support for immediate passage of the Clean Water Restoration Act.

Sincerely,



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