

Alliance for Sustainability • Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis • Austin Chapter Izaak Walton League of America
Bush Lake Chapter Izaak Walton League of America • Cass County Chapter Izaak Walton League of America
Clean Water Action • Friends of the Cloquet Valley State Forest • Grand Rapids Wes Libbey Chapter Izaak Walton League of America
Izaak Walton League of America • Jaques Chapter Izaak Walton League of America • Kids for Saving the Earth • Mankato Area Environmentalists
Minnesota Citizens for the Protection of Migratory Birds • Minnesota Conservation Federation • Minnesota Division Izaak Walton League of America
Minnesota Ornithologists' Union • Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter • Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness
Prairie Smoke Chapter of the Prairie Enthusiasts • Prairie Woods Chapter Izaak Walton League of America
Saint Paul Audubon Society • Sierra Club North Star Chapter • St. Croix River Association
W. J. McCabe Chapter Izaak Walton League of America • Walter J. Breckenridge Chapter Izaak Walton League of America • Water Legacy
Will Dilg Chapter Izaak Walton League of America • Women Observing Wildlife – Minnesota • Zumbro Valley Audubon Society

July 31, 2015

Attorney General Lori Swanson
1400 Bremer Tower
445 Minnesota Street
St. Paul, MN 55101

Dear Attorney General Swanson,

We the undersigned organizations, representing hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans dependent upon clean water for our daily life are writing to urge you not to engage in a lawsuit, but instead to stand behind the United State Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the United States Army Corps of Engineers' (Corps) new rules under the Clean Water Act which clarify protections to headwaters streams and wetlands

Minnesota has a mixed record of protecting our water at the state level. While much progress has been made over the last several decades reducing pollution from industrial and municipal discharges, little progress has been made in cleaning up waters exposed to overland non-point pollution. The Waters of the United States rules set to take effect on August 28th have been years in the careful preparation, and are needed here in Minnesota to restore federal oversight and protection for headwater streams and wetlands. These rules will not usurp Minnesota's ability to exceed federal standards, nor will they interfere with our ability to administer the Clean Water Act. The Waters of the United States rules provide a nationwide uniform minimum level of protection from which we all benefit.

Minnesota's Citizens want clean water, and we want our water protected from pollution. The EPA and Corps in these rules clarify which waters are protected under the Clean Water Act. The rules protect navigable waterways and their tributaries, specifying that a tributary must show physical features of flowing water – a bed, bank, and ordinary high water mark – to warrant protection. Ditches flowing only when it rains are not covered, and Municipal Separate Storm Water system management is not impacted. The rules protect headwaters and waters next to rivers, lakes and streams where science shows a significant connection to downstream navigable waters. The rules define limits that are objective and measurable.

In developing the Waters of the United States rules, the Agencies held hundreds of meetings with stakeholders across the country. More than one million comments were received by the EPA encouraging the finalization of this rule - a fair share from Minnesotans. The EPA and the Corps listened carefully to perspectives from all sides and used current science in developing the rules. Years in the making, the protection afforded by the Waters of the United States rules must not be interfered with by those who have enjoyed a regulatory hiatus caused by the Supreme Court rulings years ago.

We ask that you lead Minnesota in support of the new Clean Water Act Rules that give our shared water resources the protection they need, and reject the efforts of some to block their implementation.

Sincerely,

Izaak Walton League of America - Minnesota Division
Friends of the Cloquet Valley State Forest
Water Legacy

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cc: Governor Mark Dayton
Senator Amy Klobuchar
Senator Al Franken