

February 5, 2018

Office of Senator (Name)
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator (Name):

The Consortium of Aquatic Science Societies (CASS) urges you to oppose the inclusion of any Clean Water Act rider related to the “Waters of the U.S. Rule” in a final spending package for Fiscal Year 2018 that would allow the federal government to exempt the proposed repeal of the rule from the Administrative Procedures Act. In November 2017, the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill included a policy rider that would allow just such an exemption.

The repeal of the Clean Water Rule poses a significant threat to the integrity and security of our drinking water, public health, fisheries, wildlife habitat, recreation, and local economies, while significantly increasing the risks and costs associated with flood and storm damage. Wetlands keep our streams, lakes, and groundwater cleaner by treating urban and agricultural runoff through natural processes. They can also provide water during times of drought as well as absorb runoff and floodwaters during natural disasters, thereby greatly reducing disaster recovery costs. Wetlands sustain essential habitat for commercially and recreationally valuable wildlife, fish, and waterfowl to feed, nest, breed, spawn, and rear their young. Our nation’s wetlands cover a small proportion of our landscapes (<6% of the lower 48 states), yet they contribute many times their proportional share in services to human well-being.

The repeal of Clean Water protections requires a meaningful opportunity for stakeholders to engage in the process to ensure the best available science and policy analysis is considered. At a minimum, the public should have the opportunity to comment on this critically important issue.

CASS is comprised of nine professional societies representing almost 20,000 individuals with diverse knowledge of the aquatic sciences. Our members work in the private sector, academia, nongovernmental organizations, and various tribal, local, state, and federal agencies. CASS represents professional scientists and managers who combine deep subject matter expertise, a commitment to independent objectivity, and the critical review of environmental information, along with a passion for our country’s natural places and resources. CASS supports the development and use of the best available science to sustainably manage our freshwater, estuarine, coastal, and ocean resources to the benefit of the U.S. economy, environment, and public health and safety.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective on the importance of ensuring the public has the opportunity to weigh-in on the repeal of the Clean Water Rule.

Sincerely,

The American Fisheries Society
Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography

Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation
Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society
International Association for Great Lakes Research
North American Lake Management Society
Phycological Society of America
Society for Freshwater Science
Society of Wetland Scientists