

**American Fisheries Society * American Fly Fishing Trade Association
B.A.S.S. LLC * Bull Moose Sportsmen's Alliance * Delta Waterfowl
Izaak Walton League of America * National Wildlife Federation
The Wildlife Society * Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Trout Unlimited * Wildlife Management Institute**

June 1, 2012

Dear Representative:

As sportsman and conservation organizations representing millions of hunters, boaters, anglers, and conservationists nationwide, we urge you to vote for the Moran-Dingell amendment to the Energy and Water Appropriations bill (HR 5325). This amendment strikes Section 110, which would then allow the Army Corps of Engineers to finalize and implement Clean Water Act guidance. The Corps' proposed guidance will begin the process of restoring protections for streams, wetlands and other waters critical to our hunting and angling traditions and the outdoor recreation economy.

Sportsmen rely on clean water to ensure the opportunity to enjoy hunting, angling, and other outdoor-based recreation (and business) in the great outdoors. When wetlands are drained and filled and streams are polluted, sportsmen are often the first to be directly impacted. Consequently, hunters, boaters, and anglers have consistently advocated for conserving our nation's waters.

Since 2001, U.S. Supreme Court decisions in *SWANCC* (2001) and *Rapanos* (2006), along with 2003 and 2008 agency guidance that is inconsistent with those decisions and the related science, have combined to erode long-standing Clean Water Act safeguards for headwater streams and critical wetlands.

Headwater and intermittently flowing streams comprise 59 percent of all stream miles in the continental United States, and are particularly vulnerable under the decisions and existing agency guidance. At-risk wetlands and tributaries provide clean water for iconic systems such as the Mississippi River Delta and the Chesapeake Bay. They recharge aquifers like the Ogallala, help retain floodwaters in areas such as the Prairie Pothole region and Missouri River Basin, and provide important fish and wildlife habitat throughout the nation. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), prairie pothole wetlands in the northern Great Plains, together with similar wetlands in southern Canada, produce 50 to 70 percent of all North American ducks. However, in its most recent report on the status of wetlands nationwide, the FWS found the rate of wetland loss jumped 140 percent between 2004 and 2009. As these waters are polluted and diminished, their ecological, public health, and recreational benefits are lost, as well.

As we all work to create jobs and support economic recovery, we should nurture rather than neglect the economic benefits of hunting, angling, and other outdoor recreation. Hunting, boating, and angling have a tremendously positive impact on the nation's economy, including in rural communities, and support millions of jobs across the country. Consider the following:

- Using data from the FWS, the American Sportfishing Association estimates angling generates \$125 billion in annual economic activity and supports more than 1 million jobs.
- Using similar information, the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation estimates hunters contribute nearly \$25 billion to the economy, which supports 600,000 jobs.
- Data from the National Marine Manufacturers Association indicates that recreational boating contributes over \$41 billion and 337,000 jobs to the U.S. economy.
- The FWS reports duck hunting alone generates \$2.3 billion for the economy every year and supports 27,000 private sector jobs.

The Army Corps of Engineers and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed new guidance last spring for determining Clean Water Act jurisdiction. The draft guidance is science-based and clearly respects the Supreme Court’s decisions. Over the course of three months last summer, the agencies conducted an almost unprecedented public engagement process for a guidance document. Nearly 230,000 Americans commented and EPA reports that more than 90 percent of individual comments support the proposed guidance. During this process, more than 250 hunting, angling, and conservation groups from 28 states also backed the guidance and subsequent rulemaking.

To complete this process, the guidance must be finalized as a first step in affirming long-standing clean water protections for many wetlands and streams. This guidance importantly maintains existing exemptions for normal agricultural activity. At the same time, it will provide increased clarity and consistency that is badly needed by land owners, developers, conservationists, and state and federal agencies alike.

When the House debates the Energy and Water bill, we urge you to vote for the Moran-Dingell amendment. By supporting this amendment, you can help to safeguard the streams, lakes, and wetlands essential to our sports, traditions, and economy. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

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