



January 11, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi:

Physicians for Social Responsibility urges you to oppose S. J. Res. 22, the resolution of disapproval to the Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corp's Clean Water Rule. The Clean Water Rule protects the nation's rain-dependent streams and wetlands from toxic pollution under the Clean Water Act (CWA). Because it would protect the streams that are the headwaters of drinking water supplies for one in three people in the U.S., this rule is a health imperative and blocking it from enactment places the public's health at-risk.

The Clean Water Rule uses the law and science to clarify that waters like tributaries and adjacent waters must be protected under the CWA because they significantly affect the quality of downstream waters. For years, uncertainty about which bodies of water were protected by law created loopholes that put clean water supplies in jeopardy. Enactment of the Clean Water Rule aids in protecting these vital bodies of water.

Healthy wetlands and streams provide many public health benefits to communities, including improving drinking water quality and preventing flooding. Wetlands serve as natural buffers, filtering out pollutants before they impact water sources and absorbing floodwaters before they hit land. Yet without CWA protections, there is often nothing stopping floods, sediment, sewage or toxic chemicals from threatening our health.

Thousands of individuals and families become ill each year from drinking water contaminated with human and animal waste, pesticides, and heavy metals such as arsenic and lead. Science demonstrates that upstream headwaters, wetlands, lakes, or other waters act together to influence downstream waters by contributing clean water for drinking, irrigation, and recreation; filtering pollution; and

reducing downstream flooding. That's why as health professionals we support enactment of the Clean Water Rule and its protection of our vital waters.

The U.S. EPA and Army Corps should be allowed to implement this science-based rule that will improve water quality and protect the health of all communities.

Sincerely,

Physicians for Social Responsibility