

**Tuesday, January 23 by noon.**

# SIGN ON LETTER: Oppose Attacks on Clean Water Safeguards in FY18 Budget

Please sign on to the below letter opposing clean water riders in the FY18 budget. The deadline to sign on is Tuesday, January 23rd by noon.

FULL TEXT OF LETTER:

RE: Oppose attacks on clean water safeguards in FY18 budget negotiations

January 2018

Dear Senator,

Our organizations, along with our millions of members and supporters, urge you to oppose the inclusions of damaging ideological riders in a final spending package for Fiscal Year 2018, including those that attack much needed clean water protections.

In particular, three damaging policy riders that assault important water safeguards were included in the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill that the Senate Appropriations Committee released in November of last year. These include:

Section 424 would allow polluters to more easily dump dredged or fill material into our waterways, which would damage and destroy streams and wetlands.

Section 433 would resurrect the Yazoo Backwater Pumps Project in Mississippi, essentially reversing the **Bush administration's "veto" of this project and would lead to the unacceptable damage of 200,000 acres** of ecologically-rich wetlands.

**Section 434 would set a damaging precedent by exempting the Trump administration's repeal of the Clean Water Rule from many requirements under the law.**

Section 434 is especially radical. This provision aims to shield the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers' repeal of the Clean Water Rule, which provides protections for the sources of drinking water of 117 million **people, from public and legal scrutiny. This rider attempts to cut out the public's ability to have a voice in the actions of their government and prevent court challenges to the Trump administration's plan to allow** polluters to dump into our waterways. If enacted, this rider would encourage the agencies to ignore Clean Water Act and Administrative Procedure Act requirements that they meaningfully consider public **comment. It could also interfere with the courts' ability to review if the repeal is "arbitrary or capricious."** It is hard to imagine a more undemocratic provision.

Additionally, the rider would create a chaotic mess around implementation, compliance, and enforcement of the Clean Water Act itself. It would allow the EPA and Army Corps to withdraw safeguards for waterways that clearly deserve to be protected from pollution, such as tributary streams, and leave many

of them in a state of limbo. This would put our precious water bodies at risk of uncontrolled pollution, jeopardizing the clean water our children and grandchildren drink from and swim and play in.

Lastly, Section 434 could allow for all kinds of illegal shenanigans from our governmental agencies by **exempting the repeal from “any provision of statute or regulation that establishes a requirement for such withdrawal.”** Taken at face value, this sweeping language could even allow the agencies to violate anti-corruption laws while withdrawing the Clean Water Rule. Ultimately, this rider shows that the Trump **administration’s allies in Congress recognize that the administration’s scheme to get rid of the Clean Water Rule and the drinking water protections it provides are unlawful.**

In conclusion, we urge you to reject all policy riders attacking safeguards for the streams, wetlands, lakes, rivers, and other waters that our families, communities, and economy depend on, as well as broader attacks on our environment and public health. We want to reiterate our disappointment at seeing such politically-motivated attacks on important clean water safeguards in the underlying appropriations bill and urge you to remove these and all damaging, ideological provisions from a final spending package for Fiscal Year 2018.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Harpeth Conservancy