

**American Fisheries Society · American Fly Fishing Trade Association  
American Sportfishing Association · BASS LLC  
Berkley Conservation Institute · Bull Moose Sportsmen's Alliance  
Izaak Walton League of America · National Wildlife Federation  
The Nature Conservancy · The Wildlife Society  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership  
Trout Unlimited · Wildlife Management Institute**

January 31, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

The organizations listed above, representing millions of hunters, anglers, conservationists, and resource managers nationwide, look forward to working with you in your second term to protect and restore the nation's waters. In particular, we urge you to act immediately to clarify and restore Clean Water Act protections to the nation's wetlands, lakes, and streams. We also respectfully request to meet with you to discuss this matter at your earliest convenience.

For the past two years, your administration has conducted a comprehensive internal, interagency, and public process to clarify the reach of the Clean Water Act in a manner that is both legally and scientifically sound. This work has involved the development and analysis of both field guidance and draft rulemaking. It has entailed extensive legal, scientific, and economic analysis, as well as an unprecedented degree of stakeholder and public involvement.

Both the extensive public comment and recent polls on this important issue demonstrate overwhelming public support for agency action that begins restoring Clean Water Act protections for the nation's wetlands and streams. A September poll of hunters and anglers found that regardless of political affiliation, 79% of hunters and anglers favor restoring Clean Water Act protections to wetlands and waterways including smaller creeks and streams. Recent polls in Colorado, Ohio, and Wisconsin found similar results on this issue.

We appreciate the agencies' heavy investment of resources in this effort, as well as its critical importance to the nation's waters. We urge you to seize this hard-earned and historic opportunity to restore much-needed clarity, certainty, consistency, fairness and

effectiveness to state and federal Clean Water Act programs. It is time to finalize the “waters of the United States” field guidance and launch a formal “waters of the United States” rulemaking.

In urging your immediate action, we recognize, in particular, the following areas of broad consensus:

- A clear understanding of the Clean Water Act’s reach and application is essential to the regulated community, the American public, and the state and federal agencies charged with protecting the nation’s waters.
- Rather than clarity, confusion and uncertainty on the reach and application of Clean Water Act protections have been pervasive in the wake of Supreme Court decisions in 2001 and 2006.
- This confusion and uncertainty is increasing permitting costs, delays, and wasteful litigation, and undermining Clean Water Act protections for millions of wetland acres and tens of thousands of stream miles.
- This weakened enforcement also creates an unfair, uneven playing field which places greater treatment and flood protection burdens on downstream communities.
- From Supreme Court justices to the American Farm Bureau Federation to the Natural Resources Defense Council, there is clear consensus that a rulemaking revising the definition of “waters of the United States” is essential to clarify and provide certainty on the reach and application of the Clean Water Act.
- Wetlands, lakes, and small streams are interconnected. They store flood waters and contribute flow and aquatic life to larger rivers, lakes, and bays in each watershed. Science demonstrates that clean water and healthy habitat for drinking water, food production, flood storage, fishing, swimming, and other outdoor recreation cannot be ensured without limiting wetland and stream destruction and controlling water pollution at its source. Congress recognized as much in passing the 1972 and 1977 Clean Water Act amendments.
- Clean water and healthy watersheds support a strong economy. Anglers alone generated nearly \$115 billion in total economic activity in 2011, breathing life into rural communities and supporting more than one million jobs across the country.

We commend you for your comprehensive efforts to craft field guidance that is science-based and consistent with the Clean Water Act and Supreme Court decisions. We urge you to follow through by finalizing the guidance and launching the formal rulemaking that all sides agree is badly needed to provide clarity and certainty to land owners, developers, conservationists, and state and federal agencies alike.

We look forward to meeting with you soon.

Respectfully,

Gus Rassam, PhD  
Executive Director  
American Fisheries Society

Larry Schweiger  
President and CEO  
National Wildlife Federation

Ben Bulis  
President  
American Fly Fishing Trade Association

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The Nature Conservancy

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Co-Director  
Bull Moose Sportsmen's Alliance

Steve Williams  
President  
Wildlife Management Institute

Scott Kovarovics  
Executive Director  
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cc: The Honorable Lisa Jackson, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency  
The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of Army (Civil Works)  
The Honorable Nancy Sutley, Chair, White House Council on  
Environmental Quality  
The Honorable Jeffrey Zients, Acting Director, Office of Management  
and Budget  
The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture