

December 2, 2015

Dear Representative:

The 65 undersigned organizations urge you to ensure that appropriations legislation for Fiscal year 2016 is free of riders that would harm the environment. More than 100 anti-environmental policy riders have already been proposed for Fiscal Year 2016 appropriations bills, including riders that would block implementation of the Clean Water Rule and require use of outdated approaches to water resources planning.

Communities and wildlife across the country are already suffering from poorly designed and sited projects that have damaged the nation's rivers, coasts and wetlands. Such damage has increased the vulnerability of communities to floods, storm surges, rising sea levels, and droughts; destroyed vital and irreplaceable fish and wildlife habitat; and damaged vibrant resource-based economies. The nation cannot afford more of the same. Water resources planning must be modernized.

Our organizations call on you to help modernize water resources planning by opposing policy riders that would block or undermine the following:

- **The Clean Water Rule:** The Clean Water Rule is a carefully-crafted, landmark rule that clarifies longstanding Clean Water Act protections for many streams and wetlands. The Rule is based on extensive peer-reviewed science that shows the waters covered by the Rule have a significant impact on the quality of downstream waters and, therefore, deserve Clean Water Act protection. The rule will help protect streams and wetlands that provide critical habitat for fish and wildlife, provide buffers against floods, provide water in times of drought, and filter pollutants out of drinking water that would otherwise have to be treated at great expense. The Rule is critical for fish and wildlife, resource-based economies, and the 117 million Americans who depend on small streams and wetlands for clean drinking water. The Rule will also provide greater long-term regulatory certainty for landowners.
- **Water Resources Planning Guidelines:** For years a rider has remained in place that prohibits the Army Corps of Engineers from using the Water Resources Planning Principles, Requirements and Guideline (PR&G) that were developed pursuant to the Water Resources Development Act of 2007. The PR&G do not mandate any particular action or outcome. Instead, they provide commonsense direction that would improve planning. The PR&G ensure that less costly and less damaging solutions are given a full vetting when the Army Corps plans water projects. They also ensure a full accounting of the value of healthy rivers and wetlands for fish and wildlife habitat, clean drinking water, protecting communities from floods, and growing the economy. Because of the existing rider, the Corps has been forced to use the woefully out of date 1983 planning guidelines that have been attacked by experts for decades. The 1983 guidelines encourage development in high risk areas and fail to account for the public safety, economic, and environmental costs of destroying healthy waters.

- **Flood Risk Management Standard:** The Federal Flood Risk Management Standard would increase protection for people and property from harmful flooding. The Standard requires federal agencies to account for current and future climate conditions when funding projects located in a floodplain or along the coastline. This will help ensure that federal agencies make better decisions about what to build, where to build, and whether to provide federal funding to local and state projects. The result will be a tax-payer funded infrastructure that is better designed, better sited, and better protected.
- **Full Review of the St. Johns Bayou-New Madrid Floodway Project:** Senate Committee Report language urges completion of this highly destructive project and “strongly discourages” the Environmental Protection Agency from ensuring that the project complies with the Clean Water Act. Congress should not be discouraging Federal agencies from complying with the nation’s environmental laws. The St. Johns Bayou-New Madrid Floodway project would destroy an area of wetlands the size of Washington DC, cut off the last place in Missouri where the Mississippi River can reach its backwater floodplain with severe environmental consequences, and increase the risk of catastrophic flooding for a host of river communities. The project is opposed by the Missouri Department of Conservation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Department of the Interior, dozens of local and state community leaders, independent economists and scientists, 90 conservation organizations, and tens of thousands of individuals.

Federal water resources planning must be modernized to ensure that it solves – instead of causes – water resources problems. We call on you to stand up for our nation’s waters and oppose amendments and riders that would require use of outdated approaches to water resources planning and undermine protection of the nation’s waters.

Sincerely,

Mitch Reid
Program Director
Alabama Rivers Alliance

Eileen Shader
Director, River Restoration
American Rivers

Dan Tonsmeire
Riverkeeper
Apalachicola Riverkeeper

Judy Petersen
Executive Director
Kentucky Waterways Alliance

Tom Fuhrman
President
Lake Erie Region Conservancy

Kimberlee Wright
Executive Director
Midwest Environmental Advocates

Anna Weeks
Environmental Policy Associate
Arkansas Public Policy Panel

Ellen McNulty
President
Arkansas Wildlife Federation

Bob Rees
Executive Director
The Association of Northwest Steelheaders

Laura Hartt
Water Policy Director
Chattahoochee Riverkeeper

John Koefler
President
**Citizens Against Widening the
Industrial Canal**

Arthur Feinstein
Director
Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge

Dan Clark
President
Cry of the Water

Dale Beasley
President
**Columbia River Crab Fisherman's Association
[CRCFA]**

Clark Bullard
Director
**Committee on the Middle
Fork Vermilion River**

Marjorie Ziegler
Executive Director
Conservation Council for Hawai'i

Gary Botzek
Executive Director
Minnesota Conservation Federation

Barry Drazkowski
President
**Minnesota Division
Izaak Walton League of America**

Alicia C. Lloyd
Clean Water Policy Coordinator
Missouri Coalition for the Environment

Steve Nagle
President
Missouri Parks Association

Trana Rogne
Steering Committee Chair
MnDak Upstream Coalition

Adam Kolton
Vice President, National Advocacy Center
The National Wildlife Federation

Robert Moore
Senior Policy Analyst, Water Program
Natural Resources Defense Council

Duane Hovorka
Executive Director
Nebraska Wildlife Federation

George Santucci
President
New River Conservancy

Nina Bell
Executive Director
Northwest Environmental Advocates

Jesse Demonbreun-Chapman
Watershed Outreach Coordinator
Ogeechee Riverkeeper

Maya van Rossum
Delaware Riverkeeper
Delaware Riverkeeper Network

Brian Winslow
Executive Director
Delaware Nature Society

Dan Silver
Executive Director
Endangered Habitats League

Elizabeth Moran
Water and Natural Resources Program Director
Environmental Advocates of New York

Manley Fuller, III
President
Florida Wildlife Federation

Judy Rodd
Director
Friends of Blackwater

William Preston Bowling
Friends of the Los Angeles River

Alicia Uzarek
Policy Advocate
Friends of the Mississippi River

Vivian Newman
Director
Friends of the Weskeag

Ron Bottorff
Chair
Friends of the Santa Clara River

Chris Manganiello
Policy Director
Georgia River Network

Kristy Meyer
Managing Director, Agricultural, Health &
Clean Water Programs
Ohio Environmental Council

Vivian Stockman
Project Coordinator
Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition

Carol Hays, PhD
Executive Director
Prairie Rivers Network

Melanie Winter
Founder & Director
The River Project

Joseph Bogaard
Executive Director
Save Our wild Salmon Coalition

Alan Wade
Chairmen, Water Committee
Save the American River Association

Lee Willbanks
Upper St. Lawrence Riverkeeper
Save the River

Dana Beach
Executive Director
**South Carolina Coastal
Conservation League**

Chris Hesla
Executive Director
South Dakota Wildlife Federation

Caleb Dardick
Executive Director
South Yuba River Citizens League

Jerry White, Jr.
Spokane Riverkeeper

Gina Rogers
Conservation Issues Coordinator
Georgia Wildlife Federation

Bruce A. Morrison
General Counsel
Great Rivers Environmental Law Center

Matt Rota
Senior Policy Director
Gulf Restoration Network

William P. Waiters
President
Holy Cross Neighborhood Association

Liz Paul
Boise River Campaign Coordinator
Idaho Rivers United

Christine Favilla
Sierra Club Three Rivers Project

Philip Greenlee
President
International Federation of Fly Fishers

Ralph Rosenberg
Executive Director
Iowa Environmental Council

Tom Fitzgerald
Director
Kentucky Resources Council

Dana Wright
Water Policy Director
Tennessee Clean Water Network

Jennifer McKay
Policy Specialist
Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council

Nick Schou
Water Outreach Manager
Utah Rivers Council

Kim L. Greenwood, CPESC
Water Program Director and Staff Scientist
Vermont Natural Resources Council

Paul Schwartz
Executive Director
Water Alliance

Autumn Leah Bryson
Program Director
West Virginia Rivers Coalition

Barry Drazkowski
President
Will Dilg Chapter
Izaak Walton League of America

George Meyer
Executive Director
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation