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Democrat Expansion of Clean Water Act is a Federal Power Grab that Threatens Jobs, Small Businesses, Rural America

WASHINGTON D.C. – Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings and Committee Republicans released the following statements after Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman James Oberstar (D-MN) announced legislation to dramatically increase the scope of the Clean Water Act, bringing nearly every body of water - from irrigation canals, small ponds to seasonal mud-puddles - under the unlimited jurisdiction of the federal government. The legislation's removal of the word "navigable" from the current definition of the Clean Water Act would effectively allow all waters to be subject to new and sweeping federal regulations and permitting.

"This is nothing more than another dramatic expansion of federal government control over Americans' livelihoods and their private property. If this bill were to become law, there'd be no body of water in America that wouldn't be at risk of job-killing federal regulation – from farmers' irrigation canals to backyard ponds and streams to mud-puddles left by rainstorms. Current law allowing federal oversight of major waterways where boat navigation occurs makes sense, sending EPA bureaucrats into our backyards and potentially every farm in the nation is extending the government's tentacles into places it just doesn't belong. Jobs and the very viability of farms and small businesses across rural America will be put at risk if Democrats succeed with this massive power grab in Washington, DC." - Ranking Member Doc Hastings (WA-04)

"At a time when rural America is already under attack from impossibly complicated and costly regulations and aggressive environmental activists, the last thing we need is an expansion of government authority. The Democrat Majority is trying to have it both ways, they claim to be concerned about job loss in our weakened economy at the same time they introduce a bill that will kill jobs and make it more expensive for Americans to do business. This expansion of the Clean Water Act isn't about cleaner water, it's a political giveaway to the environmental left in an attempt to stomp the last bit of life from rural Americans already struggling to survive within the existing regulatory and permitting framework." - Subcommittee on Water and Power Ranking Member Tom McClintock (CA-04)

"Most Westerners are extremely concerned about the massive accumulation of federal power. In the past year, the federal government has taken control over our banks, cars and healthcare. Now, they are seeking to gain control over every drop of water, from backyard puddles to the arid playas of the West. Look at the federal government's track record on water. The manmade drought in California's Central Valley is the direct result of irresponsible federal water policy. The plight of California's agricultural community is a prime example of why we should seek to limit, not expand, the federal government's control over our nation's waterways." - Subcommittee on National Parks, Forest and Public Lands Ranking Member Rob Bishop (UT-01)

“The America ’s Commitment to Clean Water Act is a misnomer. The bill does nothing to make our water cleaner. Instead, the ACCWA inserts the federal government into water and land issues -- federalizing what have traditionally been state and local concerns. Bureaucrats in Washington, D.C. should not have regulatory power over puddles, intermittent streams, and other water sources that have absolutely no connection to interstate commerce. The Constitution is clear on which responsibilities belong to Congress and which belong to the states. The ACCWA is an unconstitutional expansion of federal power at a time when the federal government needs to start scaling back.” – **Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA-05)**

“Expanding the federal authority under the Clean Water Act would make it more costly to grow crops, provide water for cities, and operate and maintain water storage and delivery facilities. This uncertainty could have significant implications for rural families, farmers, ranchers and others who rely on irrigation and other isolated, non-navigable waters.” – **Rep. Adrian Smith (NE-03)**

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