Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 12, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

As members of Congress, we hear often from our constituents how important it is that our waterways are clean and protected. We applaud your administration's continued commitment to standing up for our nation's core environmental values, including the belief that all Americans deserve clean water.

We urge you to act quickly to restore critical Clean Water Act protections to America's waterways by finalizing guidelines developed by the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and by conducting a rulemaking in 2012 to strengthen these protections.

From the Chesapeake Bay to the Great Lakes, from the Everglades to Puget Sound, clean water is important to public health and vital to our economy and to our heritage. Every year millions of Americans enjoy our rivers, lakes and streams for swimming, fishing, boating, bird-watching, and vacation. Tens of millions of Americans depend on nearby lakes, rivers, creeks, coastal waters and wetlands for their livelihoods and for the health of their families and communities. Wetlands and headwater streams are critical to ensuring this nation's rivers and lakes remain healthy and clean.

Clean water is worth hundreds of billions of dollars when you attempt to quantify the economic value of safe drinking water, irrigation for farming, recreation and fishing. According to the United Nations Educational Science and Cultural Organization, lakes and rivers have an annual economic value of $19,580 per hectare. The Great Lakes fisheries alone generate approximately $7 billion in economic activity annually. Nationally, the commercial fishing industry generates more than $100 billion in sales and supports more than 1.5 million jobs each year .

Passage of the Clean Water Act forty years ago was one of the most important and popular environmental laws in our nation's history, creating a legacy of cleaner water. Two

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Supreme Court decisions: *Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* and *Rapanos v. the United States*, however, have created significant confusion and uncertainty regarding the limits of federal jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act. The decisions have left almost 60 percent of our country's streams, at least 20 million acres of wetlands, and 117 million Americans' drinking water at increased risk of pollution. Only when we restore Clean Water Act protections can we truly continue our country's legacy of clean water.

We appreciate that your administration took an important step in this direction last year by proposing guidelines to help clarify and protect these waters. We believe finalizing these guidelines and undertaking a rulemaking to restore critical Clean Water Act protections to America's waterways is essential to ensure our waters are sufficiently protected.

Please protect America's legacy of clean water so that future generations may continue to benefit from these critical resources. We look forward to working with you to protect our nation's waterways for many years to come.

Sincerely,

James P. Moran

Louise M. Slaughter

Gerald E. Connolly

Earl Blumenauer

Charles B. Rangel

Barbara Lee

Susan A. Davis

Betty McCollum

David N. Cicilline

Eddie Bernice Johnson

Adam Schiff

Raúl M. Grijalva

Jackie Speier

Zoe Lofgren

Pete F. Stark

Judy Chu

Jan Schakowsky

Hansen Clarke

Rosa L. DeLauro

John Conyers, Jr.

Mike Quigley

Gary Ackerman

Dennis J. Kucinich

Bob Filner

Henry Waxman

Maxine Waters

Michael Honda

Chris Van Hollen

Carolyn McCarthy

Robert C. Scott

Sander Levin

Gwen Moore

David E. Price

Sam Farr

John Lewis

Rush Holt

Michael E. Capuano

Jesse L. Jackson Jr.

Marcia L. Fudge

Nita Lowey

Diana DeGette

Tim Bishop

Henry C. Johnson Jr.

John P. Sarbanes

Howard L. Berman

Donna M. Christensen

Donna F. Edwards

Steve Cohen

Bobby L. Rush

Rubén Hinojosa

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Mazie K. Hirono

Mike Michaud

Adam Smith

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Danny K. Davis

Eleanor Holmes Norton

Jim McDermott

Eliot L. Engel

William Clay Jr.

Bill Pascrell, Jr.

Steven Rothman

Jerrold Nadler

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Frank Pallone, Jr.

Lois Capps

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