

NATIONAL UPDATE:

Clean Water Act Under Attack/Anti-Environmental Riders Are Back!

Just five years after the infamous “Dirty Water Bill,” lobbyists for polluting interests are mobilizing for a new assault on the federal Clean Water Act. Meanwhile, anti-environmental “riders” - or amendments - are once again showing up attached to large spending bills for federal agencies. Clean Water Action is mobilized to stop these anti-environmental efforts in Congress and needs your help.

Background on Anti-Environmental Riders

These “riders” are able to pass because they are embedded in large important bills. They have become a popular backdoor tool for gutting environmental, public health and safety protections.

As we write, the U.S. House has just approved a large spending bill for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that includes several such riders. These include efforts to: stall a long-overdue water pollution program (see below;); prevent EPA from enforcing even its woefully out of date drinking water standard for arsenic, and delay EPA from taking steps to implement important new clean air regulations.

From the Florida Congressional Delegation, these members voted for H.R. 4635, the spending bill with anti-environmental riders: Scarborough (R-1st,) Boyd (D-2nd,) Fowler (R-4th,) Thurman (D-5th,) Stearns (R-6th,) Mica (R-7th,) McCollum (R-8th,) Bilirakis (R-9th,) Young (R-10th,) Davis (D-11th,) Canady (R-12th,) Miller (R-13th,) Goss (R-14th,) Foley (R-16th,) Meek (D-17th,) Ros-Lehtinen (R-18th,) Diaz-Balart (R-21st,) Shaw (R-22nd,) Hastings (D-23rd.)

Four members of the Florida Delegation voted against H.R. 4635: Brown (D-3rd,) Deutsch (D-20th,) Weldon (R-15th,) Wexler (D-19th.)

Representative Bill Young (D-10th,) is the Chair of the House Appropriations Committee, which first passed this anti-environmental language.

Background on the Clean Water Act Attack

Meanwhile, recent bills introduced in the U.S. Congress would exempt certain logging and corporate agriculture activities from Clean Water Act permits. They would also prevent the U.S. Environmental Protection agency (EPA) from implementing a long over-due Clean Water Act programs to reduce “non-point” pollution. We need your help to stop them!

Since 1972, the Clean Water Act has helped improve many of our rivers and streams. However, 28 years after its passage, 40% of the rivers, lakes and streams in the U.S. still are not fishable and swimmable. The major reason for this problem is contaminated runoff, or non-point pollution. The biggest sources of this runoff are nutrients from agriculture; metals and acid from mining; and sediment from timber cutting operations.

We need the EPA and the states to start enforcing a long-ignored section of the Clean Water Act that would help reduce polluted runoff. Corporate agricultural interests and big logging companies don't want to be included in this program. They've been busy meeting with Congress and generating lots of letters to House and Senate members opposing the program. As a result, there are a number of bills now pending in Congress that attempt to stall the program all together or to create loopholes in the Clean Water Act for corporate agriculture and big timber companies

If these bills pass, progress in cleaning up thousands of rivers and streams will grind to a halt - and it

run off or to create loopholes in the Clean Water Act for corporate farms, logging operations and other sources of polluted runoff.

Send your letters to:

Representative _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Senators Bob Graham and Connie Mack
U.S. Senate
Washington DC 20510

Be sure to include your return address and ask for a reply. We would appreciate a copy of your letter and/or the response you receive by mail or e-mail.

WASTE INJECTION THREATENS FLORIDA'S DRINKING WATER!

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection has approved plans by Miami-Dade County to dispose of wastewater by injecting it into the ground. This injection well method of disposal can contaminate underground sources of drinking water. Miami-Dade County has not been able to prove that underground drinking water supplies are protected from contamination from these injection wells.

Right now, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is considering a rule that would grant Florida an exemption from federal Safe Drinking Water Act regulations that protect underground sources of drinking water from contamination by injection into deep wells. We must urge the EPA not to issue a rule that condemns Florida's drinking water to contamination.

What you can do:

Write: Tell EPA Administrator Carol Browner and the Region 4 Deputy Administrator not to give Florida an exemption to inject wastewater into the ground and threaten Florida's drinking water supplies.

Carol Browner
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington DC 20460

John Hankinson, Jr.
Regional Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4
Atlanta Federal Center
61 Forsyth Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30303-3104

Turn out: U.S. EPA will hold a hearing in Florida sometime this summer on the injection well plans. If you want to be notified so that you can attend, please contact Cynthia Valencia at the Legal Environmental Assistance Foundation, or 850-681-2591.

PREVENTING HARM: *Common Chemicals Linked to Developmental Disabilities*

In May, Clean Water Action and Clean Water Fund collaborated with Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility in the release of their important new report "In Harm's Way." This report reviews the evidence that many toxins present in our air and water, and commonly found in our homes, are linked to problems with brain development in children. To learn more about this report and how to get involved in eliminating these toxins, see our new web site at www.preventingharm.org or contact us at the address or phone below.

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