



Photo by Judy Berk

# Defend the Clean Water Rule

Maine has some of the most scenic and valued rivers, lakes, and streams in the nation. Our state's clean water supports a vibrant tourist economy and adds immeasurably to Maine's way of life. Waterfront property values are also vital to town budgets. Maine's lakes provide safe drinking water for nearly half of all Mainers, sustain 52,000 jobs, and bring more than \$3.5 billion into the state's economy annually. We rely on federal protections to keep these waterways clean and healthy for all of Maine's people.

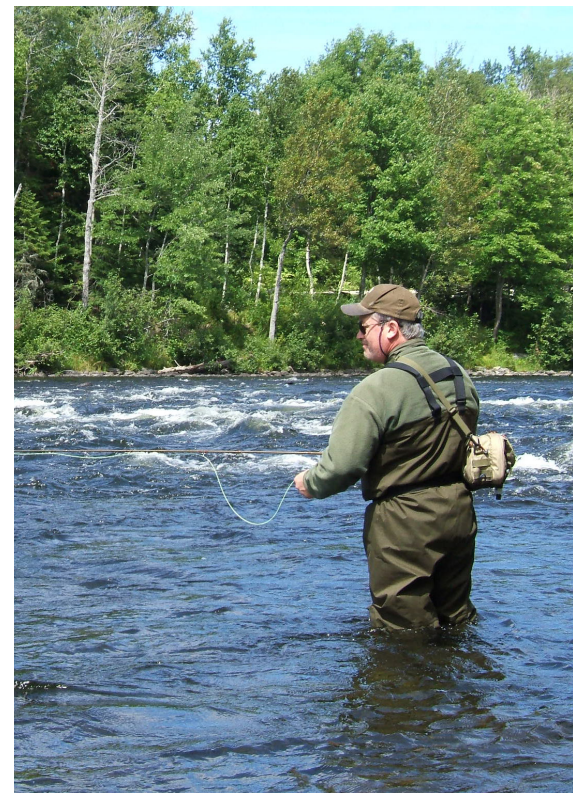
## Federal Clean Water Protections are Under Attack

The acting administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), former coal lobbyist Andrew Wheeler, has unveiled a proposal to gut the nation's Clean Water Rule, a safeguard enacted in 2015 to reinforce protections under the federal Clean Water Act, and replace it with the "Dirty Water Rule." This would be a radical reinterpretation of the Clean Water Act that would eliminate protections for wetlands and streams.

## How the Current Clean Water Rule Benefits Mainers

Federal clean water protections for small streams and wetland benefit Mainers in a number of ways:

- **Maintaining high-quality drinking water:** Nearly half of all people in Maine drink water from surface water sources, including our lakes. Protecting small streams and wetlands that feed into these lakes is critical to keeping them clean.
- **Supporting our economy:** Clean water is critical for our outdoor recreation, hunting, and fishing industries. Maine's outdoor recreation economy provides the state with \$8.2 billion each year in income; in 2011 people spent nearly \$600 million to fish and hunt in Maine, according to most recently available data. Clean water also supports Maine's growing craft brewing industry, which contributed \$260 million to the state's economy in 2017.
- **Protecting native species:** Small streams provide critical habitat for one of Maine's prized sport fish: brook trout. Maine's many small wetlands filter pollutants that would otherwise harm the clean water brook trout need to survive and provide important habitat for waterfowl.
- **Preventing flooding:** We rely on wetlands to help keep cities and towns safe from flooding. Wetlands soak up rainwater during storms that would have otherwise potentially caused flooding downstream.



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## Gutting Clean Water Rule Protections Would Increase Pollution

- Oil spills—such as pipeline breaks—into streams or wetlands may no longer be considered violations of the Clean Water Act.
- Industrial facilities or factory farms could discharge chemical waste or toxic pesticides into unprotected streams without fear of federal consequences.
- Developers may no longer need to obtain a permit before paving over or building on wetlands—leading to a loss of important wildlife habitats and an increase in flooding risk.
- Water treatment plants might be able discharge partially treated sewage into streams without adhering to water quality standards.
- States may no longer be required to clean up polluted streams or wetlands.
- Oil storage facilities near these waters may no longer have to develop oil spill prevention and response plans.
- When agencies fail to enforce the law against polluters of these waterways, the public could no longer hold polluters accountable through citizens' suits under the Clean Water Act.



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## We Need More Protections for Clean Water. Not Less.

The Trump Administration's proposed Dirty Water Rule rollback takes us in the wrong direction. Instead of protecting Maine's clean water for our people, wildlife, and economic growth, it:

- **Denies science.** The Dirty Water Rule is based on lobbying from polluting industries and corporate special interests, not science. We know that water flows downstream, and in order to keep our lakes and rivers healthy we need to protect the small streams that flow into them.
- **Uses shaky legal arguments.** The Dirty Water Rule is based on an extremely narrow interpretation of Clean Water Act jurisdiction, which was rejected by the Supreme Court and the previous two administrations.
- **Claims clarity, but only adds confusion.** The Dirty Water Rule claims to add regulatory certainty, but in reality further confuses which water resources require federal protection.
- **Could get worse.** EPA has invited input on removing even more streams from protection.

**We need to stop this roll back of clean water protections. Maine has too much to lose.**  
Please take action to protect clean water at [www.nrcm.org/take-action](http://www.nrcm.org/take-action).

For more information contact Kristin Jackson, Federal Project Outreach Coordinator  
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