

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 29, 2013

PROTECT OUR STREAMS FROM MINING WASTES
Become an Original Cosponsor of the Clean Water Protection Act

Dear Colleague:

We urge you to join us in protecting water quality and the quality of life of those affected by mountaintop mining by becoming an original cosponsor of the Clean Water Protection Act.

Mountaintop removal, a mining method where the top of a mountain is removed to extract thin seams of coal, permanently destroys streams, forests and mountains. The broken rock or "excess spoil" from this process is usually dumped into nearby valleys, creating "valley fills" that cover hundreds of acres of land and bury hundreds of miles of streams.

According to the EPA, to date at least one million acres of Appalachia's mountains have been leveled by mountaintop removal mining, and nearly 2,000 miles of streams have been buried and destroyed by the dumping of mountaintop removal waste. According to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) released in 2003 to accompany the proposed Stream Buffer Zone rule, the impacts of mountaintop removal valley fills will ultimately have a "disproportionately large impact on the total aquatic genetic diversity of the nation."

An EPA scientific study released in July 2008 shows that more than 63 percent of the streams sampled below mountaintop coal mining operations exhibited long-term impairments to aquatic organisms. In some large watersheds more than half of the streams are impaired.

Our bill would amend the Clean Water Act to clarify that any pollutant discharged into the water primarily to dispose of waste cannot be regulated under federal law as "fill material." It is simply inappropriate to allow the contaminated excess spoil from this type of mining to be dumped in mountain streams where it can pollute waterways, fill valleys, and endanger the lives of area residents.

Please join us in supporting the Clean Water Protection Act to protect our waterways by prohibiting the dumping of mining fill into rivers and streams. To become a cosponsor, or for more information, please contact: Tuley Wright (Pallone) at 5-4671 or Ashley Johnson (Reichert) at 5-7761.

Sincerely,



FRANK PALLONE, JR.
Member of Congress



DAVID G. REICHERT
Member of Congress