



Audubon Armchair Activist

Audubon's Letter of the Month Club

October 2003

Help Stop Any Further Weakening of Our Nation's Clean Water Laws

In 2002, America celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Clean Water Act - a law that is widely considered one of the most successful environmental laws in our nation's history. Yet in spite of the progress that has been made over the last 30 years, over 40% of our nation's waters remain polluted.

In January, 2001, the Supreme Court created a legal loophole that removes protections for certain "isolated, non-navigable waters," leaving over 20% of the nation's wetlands vulnerable both to physical destruction and discharges of pollutants. Earlier this year, thousands upon thousands of Audubon supporters submitted commits to the EPA urging them to ensure Clean Water Act coverage for all America's waterways. The EPA has not yet released its final decision. And while we anxiously await the findings, there is a proposal pending in the U.S. Congress right now that would reverse these rulings and keep the promise made over 30 years ago with the enactment of the Clean Water Act.

It's the Clean Water Authority Restoration Act, bill number S.473 in the Senate, and H.R.962 in the U.S. House of Representatives. The Act reaffirms the original intent of the Clean Water Act which is to restore, maintain and provide clean and safe water, and reinstates protections for isolated wetlands that help with flood control and filter pollutants from our water, making it safer for birds, wildlife and most importantly, people.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Our nation's waters and wetlands are all interconnected. Each river, stream, lake and wetland is linked to the rest. Clean and healthy water is vital for our economy and our fisheries. It is critical for human health. It is critical for birds and wildlife. Function-

ing, intact natural wetlands protect people's property, livelihood, and lives from potentially damaging floods.

Ecologically speaking, wetlands are nature's filters, and act as the guardians of clean water. They help keep our rivers, lakes and streams clean, healthy and pollution-free. The more wetlands we destroy, the more contaminants we will have in our drinking water. Wetlands save communities millions of dollars that would otherwise be spent on expensive water treatment facilities.

Economically speaking, wetlands are nurseries for millions of birds, fish and shellfish. Seventy-five percent of all commercial marine fish and shellfish, which contribute billions of dollars in harvests each year, depend on wetlands. In 2001, people engaged in wildlife watching, fishing and hunting activities that contributed more than \$108 billion in revenue to local communities across the country.

SO TAKE ACTION!

We need to be moving forward on cleaning up our waterways, not going backward! When protections for our waters are removed, the only things that are guaranteed are more pollution, less wildlife, and greater human health and safety risks. That's too great a risk for us and for future generations. That is why Audubon and our partners in conservation are working hard to see that Congress passes the Clean Water Authority Restoration Act. And you can help! Please contact your two U.S. Senators and your U.S. Representative and urge them to pass the Clean Water Authority Restoration Act now! Refer to the enclosed letter, or send it via our special website at www.audubon.org, and select the TAKE ACTION key.

Your Name
Address
City, State Zip

Date

The Honorable NAME OF LAWMAKER HERE
U.S. Senate (or U.S. House of Representatives)
Washington, D.C. 20510 (or 20515 for House of Representatives)

Dear Senator Last Name Here: (Or Representative Last Name Here):

As a constituent concerned with conservation, I stand with the National Audubon Society in urging you to support the Clean Water Authority Restoration Act of 2003, bill numbers S.473 in the Senate, and H.R.962 in the House. This important legislation will not only prevent any further weakening of the Clean Water Act, but will provide much needed protections for all of America's waterways.

Three decades ago, our government promised clean and safe rivers, lakes, and coastal waters for our communities. Despite some important successes, over 40% of our nation's waters remain polluted. We need to be moving forward on cleaning up our waterways, not moving backward.

In January, 2001, the Supreme Court created a legal loophole that removes protections for certain "isolated, non-navigable waters," leaving over 20% of our nation's wetlands vulnerable both to physical destruction and to discharges of pollutants.

Please reverse this trend by supporting the Clean Water Authority Restoration Act. Passage of the Act will reinstate protections for isolated wetlands that help with flood control and filter pollutants from our waters, making it safer for birds, wildlife and most importantly, people.

When protections for our waters are removed, the only things that are guaranteed are more pollution, less birds and wildlife, and greater human health and safety risks. That's too great a risk for us and for future generations. Please stop any further weakening of the Clean Water Act, and instead, support efforts to reaffirm its goals and reinstate protections for America's wetlands. Please do so by supporting the Clean Water Authority Restoration Act, and by signing the letter to President Bush organized by Representatives Oberstar, Saxton, Dingell and Leach (Senate: organized by Senators Feingold, JEFFORDS and Boxer) that urges him to not pursue policy or regulatory changes that would reduce the scope of waters protected under the Clean Water Act.

Please let me know where you stand on this issue. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Your Name Here