

The Honorable Mark Warner
U.S. Senate
475 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tim Kaine
U.S. Senate
231 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

XXXX, 2015

Dear Senators Warner and Kaine:

We, the undersigned sportsmen and women of Virginia, write to express our strong support of the Administration's Clean Water Rule and urge you to support it in Congress. Collectively, we cannot enjoy our love of fishing and hunting in the Commonwealth without clean water.

According to the 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service every five years, Virginia's 3.3 million sportsmen, women and wildlife enthusiasts spent approximately \$3 billion in 2011 on outdoor pursuits. The economic contributions from hunting, recreational fishing and wildlife watching have continued to grow over the past several decades.

On a larger scale, the outdoor recreation industry as a whole is a key economic driver for Virginia and the surrounding region. The Outdoor Industry Association's "Virginia Outdoor Recreation Economy State Report" finds that outdoor recreation generates \$13 billion in customer spending annually and provides \$923 million in state and local tax revenue to Virginia. Additionally, the industry supports 138,000 jobs and \$3.9 billion in wages and salaries in the Commonwealth alone.

All of these statistics are predicated on clean water. Thankfully, the new rule reduces confusion about the Clean Water Act by clarifying the types of waters covered under the Act. Knowing which waters are covered is a significant step towards ensuring clean water, healthy fish and wildlife populations, as well as sustainable ecosystems. The Clean Water Rule will protect headwater streams throughout the Blue Ridge Mountains and Shenandoah Valley, and waters that feed the Chesapeake Bay, which provide vital habitat for trout and waterfowl respectively. Moreover, the waters protected by the new rule are sources of clean water for downstream communities.

Most importantly, recent studies show that Virginia's sportsmen and women support this new application of the Clean Water Act. Eighty-two percent of survey participants expressed support of the rule, while a near majority of 49 percent indicated strong support. In fact, nearly all sportsmen say that water quality and fish and wildlife habitat issues are at least somewhat significant in their vote decisions (95 percent), but 37 percent regard them as "very important," meaning a "primary factor" in their vote decision. Ultimately, support for clean water is both broad-based and widespread among hunters and anglers in Virginia with 93 percent of Virginia hunters and anglers -

and 89 percent of those nationally - say that the Clean Water Act has been good for the country, with majorities of every single demographic sub-group echoing this sentiment.

Clarifying these protections, especially after events like the dead zones discovered in the Chesapeake Bay last year, will bring about healthier ecosystems that will benefit fish and wildlife and allow the people of Virginia places to recreate and our outdoor economy to thrive.

We thank you for your continued leadership on natural resource issues, and we hope that you will stand up and support the new Clean Water Rule.

Sincerely,

Virginia Council of Trout Unlimited

David and Heather Anderson
Arlington, VA

Steve Moyer
Reston, VA

William J. "Bill" Amshey, Jr.
Oak Hill, Virginia 20171

Tom and Beth Sadler
Verona, VA 24482

Herschel L. Finch
Front Royal, VA 22630
Conservation Chairman -Potomac River Smallmouth Club
Conservation Chairman -Izaak Walton League, Warren Co. Virginia Chapter

Brian Trow
Mossy Creek Fly Fishing
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Colby Trow
Mossy Creek Fly Fishing
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Jeff Kelble
Potomac Riverkeeper Network
Boyce, VA 22620

Matt Miles
Lynchburg, VA

Art Webb
President/CEO BCF
Virginia Beach, VA 23462

L.E. Rhodes, Jr.
Hatchmatcher Guide Service
Scottsville, VA 24590

Michael Spillias
Fly Rod and Reel Guide
Leesburg, VA

Richie Hughes
New River Trios LLC
Galax, VA 24333

Beau Beasley
Virginia Fly Fishing & Wine Festival
Warrenton, VA

Jim Richmond
Owner, Appalachian Outdoor Adventures
Pembroke, VA

Daniel Ward
Manager, The Boathouse at Fletcher's Cove
Arlington, VA

Kenny Mendez
Arlington, VA

Raymond Fletcher
Haymarket, VA

Cc: Virginia House Delegation