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Analysis: Repealing the Clean Water Rule would be Devastating for the Puget Sound

EPA Comment Period Until August 28, 2017

Seattle, WA – New analysis by Environment Washington shows 48% of all stream miles in the Puget Sound Watershed will be left without federal protections by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt’s proposal to repeal the Clean Water Rule. The Clean Water Rule restored federal protections to half our nation’s streams and thousands of wetlands across the country, including 7,671 miles of streams in the Puget Sound basin.

“Repealing the Clean Water Rule would be devastating to the Puget Sound basin: Instead of safeguarding our drinking water, Administrator Pruitt is proposing to stop protecting drinking water sources for 1 in 3 Americans, including 2 million people who live in Puget Sound basin counties. It defies common sense, sound science and the will of the American people,” said Bruce Speight, Environment Washington Director.

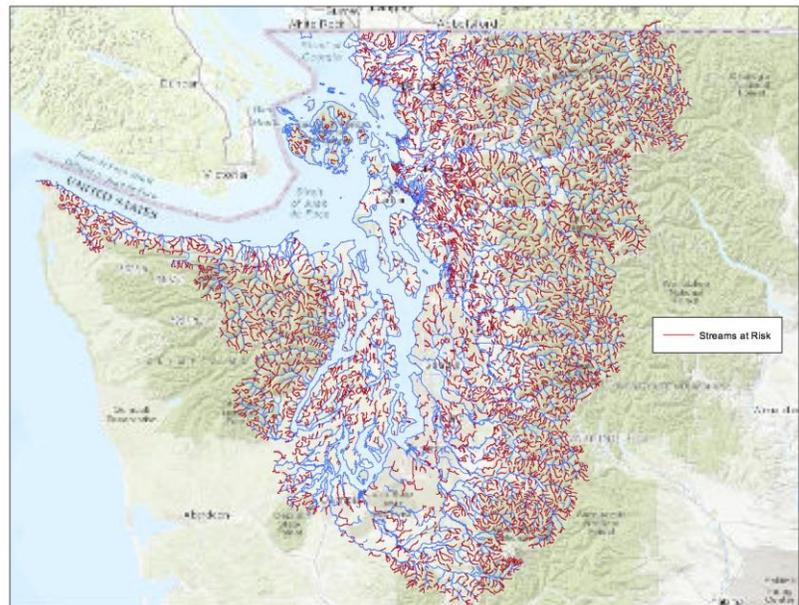


Image depicting Puget Sound tributaries at risk if the Clean Water Rule is repealed.

Clean water is vital to our ecology, our health, and our quality of life. We are already seeing drinking water contaminated by algal blooms and toxic chemicals, and a dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico that

scientists now estimate will be the size of New Jersey this summer. The last thing we should do is weaken protections for our water.

Finalized in 2015, the Clean Water Rule restored federal protections to half the nation's streams, which help provide drinking water to one in every three Americans. The rule also protects millions of acres of wetlands that provide wildlife habitat and keep pollutants out of America's great waterways, from the Puget Sound to the Chesapeake Bay.

More than 800,000 Americans – including more than 1,000 business owners, local officials, farmers, and health professionals – supported the historic clean water rule. On the other side, the most vociferous opponents of the rule include the oil and gas industry, coal companies, developers, and lobbyists for corporate agribusiness.

“From the Hood Canal to the San Juan Islands to Elliott Bay, these are the places we like to fish, swim, canoe, and just enjoy the scenery with our families. We also rely on these waterways for drinking water, and they need more federal protections not less. We call on the EPA to reconsider this reckless repeal and stand up for our drinking water, not for polluters,” said Speight.

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Environment Washington is a statewide, membership-based environmental advocacy organization that works for clean air, clean water and open spaces. www.environmentwashington.org.