

To the Panel for the Review of the EPA Water Body Connectivity Report:
Docket #: EPA-HQ-OA-2013-0582

As professors, scientists and researchers who study our streams, wetlands, and environment, we write to you in support of the EPA Science Advisory Board's Report, *Connectivity of Streams and Wetlands to Downstream Waters*.

Supreme Court decisions and subsequent agency guidance have created confusion and uncertainty regarding what waters are protected under the Clean Water Act. This uncertainty has left nearly 60% of our nation's streams, 20 million acres of wetlands, and the drinking water for 117 million Americans at risk of even more pollution.

The science is clear: pollution that enters an upstream waterway has a demonstrable effect on the health of the waterways it feeds into. If we don't protect the network of streams, headwaters, and wetlands upstream, we have no way of protecting some of our nation's most treasured rivers, lakes, and bays.

The goal of the Clean Water Act is "to restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the nation's waters." Smaller waterways – including isolated wetlands – are an integral part of the nation's network of waters, and provide numerous ecological goods and services of significant value to society. If our nation hopes to achieve the goals of the Clean Water Act, all our streams and wetlands must remain within its jurisdiction.

We urge the Science Advisory Board to finalize a strong report on the connectivity of our waters that reflects the best science available, including that which shows the importance of protecting isolated wetlands across the country.

Sincerely,

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