



October 16, 2017

The Honorable Joe Manchin III
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
172 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senators Manchin and Capito,

West Virginia Rivers Coalition and the undersigned West Virginia organizations, are concerned about the federal appropriations that designate the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's allocations for state programs that manage the protection of water quality. We urge you to support the continuation of the 2017 appropriations for key programs that help West Virginia's rivers and streams.

The U.S. House of Representatives appropriation for the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies bill reduced funding for EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program. The Bay Program is significant in its six-state cooperative effort that affects 180,000 miles of streams and rivers and 18 million people. We are pleased that West Virginia, which comprises the headwaters of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, is part of that effort. We are also cognizant of the benefits of water clean-up programs in West Virginia supported by Bay Program funds. We believe the reduction of support for the Bay Program in the House appropriations bill will be detrimental to West Virginians in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. We request that you maintain the 2017 funding level of \$73 million in the 2018 appropriations, and support last year's requirement that \$6 million of this allocation go for Small Watershed Grants and \$6 million for Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants. These grant programs alone have brought in approximately \$5 million since 2010 for projects in West Virginia.

We also are concerned about policy "riders" added to the bill in the House. Restricting efforts to clean up our waters is not a benefit for our citizens and may cause costly future clean ups for the public to bear. Here are a few examples that stand to place West Virginia's waters at risk:

- Prohibiting EPA from enforcing the Chesapeake Bay TMDL on states that are not implementing their own clean-up plans. This would shift pollution reduction responsibilities from states like PA to headwater states, such as WV.
- Prohibiting EPA from ensuring mining companies are financially capable of cleaning up pollution that operations cause to the land and water.
- Prohibiting the use of funds to issue any regulation under the Solid Waste Disposal Act that applies to an animal feeding operation.
- Prohibiting the use of funds to require permits for the discharge of dredged or fill material for certain agricultural activities.
- Authorizing the withdrawal of the Waters of the United States Rule without regard to any provision of statute or regulation that establishes a requirement for such withdrawal.

Conserving and Restoring West Virginia's Exceptional Rivers and Streams

Thank you for considering these concerns. Please fully fund essential EPA programs and reject riders that put the future quality of our water supplies at risk.

Angie Rosser, Executive Director
West Virginia Rivers Coalition

George Santucci, Executive Director
New River Conservancy

Cynthia Ellis, President
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

Charles Marsh, President
Sleepy Creek Watershed Association

Gary Zuckett, Executive Director
West Virginia Citizen Action Group

Sherry Evasic, President
Blue Heron Environmental Network

Julie Archer, Co-founder
West Virginia Surface Owners Rights Organization

Natalie Thompson, Executive Director
Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition

Judy Rodd, Executive Director
Friends of Blackwater

John Bird, Conservation Chair
West Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club

Brent Walls
Upper Potomac Waterkeeper

Jonathan Rosenbaum, President
League of Women Voters of West Virginia