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Clean Water and Restoration Act needs to be passed

The Clean Water Act, one of the country's most successful environmental laws, has protected nearly two-thirds of our lakes and rivers making them safe for recreation, fishing and wildlife, compared to just 36 percent before the law was passed. Currently, unclear Supreme Court rulings have allowed polluters and special interest groups to strip federal protections from many of our streams and wetlands and roll back the progress we have made in protecting our nation's water resources.

The Clean Water Act's long-standing pollution protections are being undermined as polluters take advantage of the confusion generated by the Supreme Court. But now, polluting industries are trying to weaken these long-standing clean water protections. Polluters are working to strip protections for tens of thousands of miles of rivers and streams and 20 million acres of wetlands nationally.

Here in Colorado, Clean Water Act protections could be lost for 68 percent of our streams and the drinking water for

3.5 million people could be placed in jeopardy by lax enforcement of the Clean Water Act.

Greeley boasts some of the nation's best drinking water — being siphoned straight from Rocky Mountain snowmelt — but even this is in danger of being polluted if the Clean Water Act isn't restored to its previous stature by the Clean Water Restoration Act.

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has passed a conciliated version of the Clean Water Restoration Act, which would restore Clean Water Act protections to our at-risk waters. Now the full Senate and House of Representatives need to address this urgent problem.

Congress must pass the strongest bill possible to restore the Clean Water Act protections to water bodies that had been protected for decades. Every week that Congress fails to act means dozens of additional streams, lakes, tributaries, and wetlands lose federal pollution protections under the law. Please ask Rep. Betsy Markey to support this bill and clean water.

Dr. Charles Olmsted, Greeley