

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Members of the Congressional Western Caucus joined in opposition to legislation introduced today by Democratic Congressman James Oberstar (D-MN) that seeks to provide the federal government with jurisdictional authority over all water across the entire United States.

The legislation, entitled "America's Commitment to Clean Water Act", seeks to expand the federal government's control of U.S. water under the Clean Water Act by removing the existing requirement that regulated waterways be "navigable." Under the proposed legislation, all inland waters, on both public and private lands, would be controlled and regulated by the federal government.

On December 8, 2009, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman Rob Bishop (R-UT) along with fellow House and Senate Western Caucus members outlined their concerns in a letter to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) regarding the Senate "Clean Water Restoration Act" (S.787) and the anticipated introduction of similar legislation in the House.

Western Caucus Chairman Rob Bishop (R-UT): "Most Westerners are extremely concerned about the massive accumulation of federal power. In the past year, the federal government has taken control over our banks, cars and healthcare. Now, they are seeking to gain control over every drop of water, from backyard puddles to the arid playas of the West. Look at the federal government's track record on water. The man-made drought in California's Central Valley is the direct result of irresponsible federal water policy. The plight of California's agricultural community is a prime example of why we should seek to limit, not expand, the federal government's control over our nation's waterways."

Congressman Paul Broun, M.D. (R-GA): "The liberals' attempt to push the Clean Water Restoration Act amounts to one of the most breathtaking efforts in recent years to exert federal control over the states and property rights of individuals. Under this legislation, the federal government could essentially seize control over a family's private pond or a farmer's retention pond. This would give the federal government unprecedented control over virtually every wet area in the country."

Congressman Jason Chaffetz (R-UT): "Water is the life blood for western communities. Take away water and you take away life. The West continues to be in the crosshairs of outsiders. The so-called Clean Water Restoration Act will subject farms, ranches, and backyards to vast federal regulations and mandates. I do not envy the bureaucrat who informs the farmer that the 'natural pond' in the pasture requires a permit, or the regulator who condemns a swimming hole due to the 'Migratory Bird Rule'. This is a bad bill and I will work tirelessly to defeat it."

Congressman Mike Coffman (R-CO): "The sweeping expansion of federal power this bill provides over all of our nation's waterways is deeply troubling. The Clean Water Restoration Act would in effect trump Colorado's state's rights and pre-empt state and local governments from making local decisions. Bureaucrats in Washington have no businesses telling Colorado what to do with its water. This bill is just yet another power grab to expand the federal government and it must be rejected."

Congresswoman Mary Fallin (R-OK): "This bill represents yet another job-killing intrusion into our state and local communities. The majority of Oklahomans believe we need to be good stewards of our precious water supply and we have ample safeguards on the state and local level. We don't need more intrusion from the federal government. We have seen what happens when the federal government takes control of health care, banks, car companies and student loans. In Oklahoma, water is too precious of a commodity to risk additional intrusion from the federal government."

Congressman Doug Lamborn (R-CO): "This bill is a job killer. It is another attempt by the Democrats and President Obama to control more and more aspects of business and private property. This would devastate Colorado businesses, ranchers and agricultural producers by killing jobs, and subjecting landowners to unprecedented regulation of their private property. While we all agree that clean water is essential, this bill goes far beyond that and tramples on the rights of states and individuals. It is another example of Washington trying to impose ineffective, burdensome regulations on our job-creating sector."

Congresswoman Cynthia Lummis (R-WY): "The Clean Water Restoration Act is a serious concern for Wyoming ranchers, farmers, private property owners and local communities. This overreach of government regulation on sitting water only adds to unprecedented expansion of government interference in Wyoming people's everyday lives. Adding another regulation to the already-bloated list of government regulations is not the answer. This sweeping regulation lacks common sense and intrudes on the lives of Wyoming people. I will work to defeat it."

Congressman Tom McClintock (R-CA): "At a time when rural America is already under attack from impossibly complicated and costly regulations and aggressive environmental activists, the last thing we need is an expansion of government authority. The Democrat Majority is trying to have it both ways, they claim to be concerned about job loss in our weakened economy at the same time they introduce a bill that will kill jobs and make it more expensive for Americans to do business. This expansion of the Clean Water Act isn't about cleaner water, it's a political giveaway to the environmental left in an attempt to stomp the last bit of life from rural Americans already struggling to survive within the existing regulatory and permitting framework."

Congressman Lee Terry (R-NE): "Every American wants to enjoy clean lakes, rivers and streams, but state and local conservation and water districts have done a much better job of protecting our waterways in recent decades. We do not need another federal takeover of our water resources and a new nationwide regulatory scheme under the EPA."



