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## Proposed changes to Clean Water Act spark controversy

Proposed changes to the Clean Water Act have prompted criticism from stakeholders and politicians on both sides of the aisle. This June, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers proposed a rule to clarify what types of water fall under the protection of the Clean Water Act. In the current definition, “waters of the U.S.” include navigable, commercial waterways and their tributaries and associated wetlands, allowing for broad interpretations that can prompt controversy.

More than 200 congressmen from both parties have voiced opposition, saying the ruling extends regulatory jurisdiction too far. Farmers, developers, and other stakeholders have expressed concern that the rule will threaten property rights and increase federal control.

EPA Deputy Administrator Bob Perciasepe has stated that much of the controversy is based on misinformation, denying allegations that the rule would regulate dry washes, entire floodplains, or agricultural and roadside ditches. The EPA has stated that the proposed change does not protect any waters not already included in the Clean Water Act.

The EPA is requesting comments on the proposed rule. The comment period for stakeholders has been extended through October 20, 2014.

Sources: E&E News, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington Post

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