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On September 9, a majority of House Republicans united with 35 Democrats to successfully pass H.R. 5078, a bill blocking the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed changes to the Clean Water Act (CWA).

The EPA, together with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, introduced the rule to clarify what types of water are protected under the current definition of "waters of the U.S." in the CWA. Despite EPA statements that the proposed change does not include any waters not already protected under the CWA, critics have accused the agency of regulatory overreach. Representative Steve Southerland (R-FL) introduced H.R. 5078, which prohibits the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the EPA from moving forward with the rule and from using the existing rule as the basis for any future rulemaking regarding the CWA.

Despite strong opposition from the White House and arguments from Democrats on the House floor, H.R. 5078 passed 262-152 with just one Republican, Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ), voting in opposition.

The bill will now move on to the Senate for consideration.

Sources: E&E News, Congress.gov
