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Rural America Solutions Group Co-Chairs Call for Committee Hearings on Federal Power Grab of Clean Water Act

Bill threatens livelihood of farmers, small businesses and rural Americans nationwide

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Co-Chairs of the Rural America Solutions Group Frank Lucas (R-OK), Sam Graves (R-MO) and Doc Hastings (R-WA) sent a [letter](#) to Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman James Oberstar, Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson, Small Business Committee Chairwoman Nydia Velazquez and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Nick Rahall asking for hearings on H.R. 5088, America's Commitment to Clean Water Act.

This bill greatly expands the scope of the Clean Water Act by removing the word “navigable” from its current definition. As a result, every body of water – from farmers’ irrigation canals, to streams, small ponds and backyard muddle-puddles – could suddenly be subjected to sweeping new federal regulations and permitting. This vast expansion of government authority would threaten jobs, increase costs for farmers and small businesses, and impact local water storage and delivery systems.

Letter excerpts:

"Although the bill has been referred to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, this far-reaching legislation would have a great impact on Western irrigation projects, farming and ranching operations, mining and small businesses that are within the jurisdiction of the Committees of which you are Chairs and we Ranking Members. At a time when creating and protecting jobs should be our top priority, we need to gain a full understanding of the effects that this bill will have on the economies of rural communities and the nation as a whole."

“We understand that a commitment was made last year to hold hearings on new legislation aimed at increasing federal water regulations. Unfortunately, no hearings have been scheduled on H.R. 5088...In fact, according to the Bureau of National Affairs, a Democrat majority staff member has explicitly stated "no hearings would be held." This is

disconcerting and we hope it is not indicative of how this bill will be considered and debated in this body.”

“The American people deserve more openness and transparency in our government. We stand ready to work with you to ensure that the voice of the people is heard on this legislation.”

[Click here to read the full text of letter.](#)

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