

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 22, 2010

The Honorable James Oberstar
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall, II
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nydia Velazquez
Chairwoman
Committee on Small Business
2361 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Oberstar, Chairman Rahall, Chairman Peterson and Chairwoman Velazquez,

We write to request hearings and public input opportunities on H.R. 5088 (America's Commitment to Clean Water Act) so that the American people and Members of the House of Representatives can better understand the possible consequences of this legislation.

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.

A goal of September 2010 has been publicly set for the full House to consider this bill. For this reason, it is imperative that each of our Committees be allowed adequate time to hold and participate in proceedings this summer aimed at gathering public input and determining the application of the bill on rural communities across the nation.

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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 during the 2nd Session of the 111th Congress to debate this legislation. 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.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your prompt reply to this request.

Sincerely,



Doc Hastings
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources



Frank Lucas
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture



Sam Graves
Ranking Member
Committee on Small Business

cc: The Honorable John Mica, Ranking Member, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure