

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7194

To repeal the Waters of the United States rule and amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act definition of navigable waters, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 29, 2018

Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER (for herself and Mr. GIBBS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To repeal the Waters of the United States rule and amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act definition of navigable waters, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

4 This Act may be cited as the “Regulatory Certainty
5 for Navigable Waters Act”.

6 SEC. 2. WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES AND NAVIGABLE 7 WATERS.

(a) WOTUS REPEAL.—The final rule issued by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency

1 and the Secretary of the Army entitled “Clean Water
2 Rule: Definition of ‘Waters of the United States’” (80
3 Fed. Reg. 37053 (June 29, 2015)) is repealed.

4 (b) NAVIGABLE WATERS DEFINITION.—Section 502
5 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C.
6 1362) is amended by striking paragraph (7) and inserting
7 the following:

8 “(7) NAVIGABLE WATERS.—

9 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘navigable
10 waters’ means—

11 “(i) the territorial seas;

12 “(ii) interstate waters which are pres-
13 ently used, or are susceptible to use in
14 their natural and ordinary condition, as a
15 means to transport interstate or foreign
16 commerce;

17 “(iii) relatively permanent, standing,
18 or continuously flowing bodies of water
19 that form geographical features commonly
20 known as streams, rivers, or lakes, that
21 flow directly into waters described in
22 clause (ii); or

23 “(iv) wetlands that have a continuous
24 surface water connection to waters de-
25 scribed in clause (ii) or (iii).

1 “(B) EXCLUSIONS.—The term ‘navigable
2 waters’ shall be limited to the waters described
3 in subparagraph (A) and does not include—
4 “(i) intermittent or ephemeral waters;
5 “(ii) subsurface waters, including
6 ground water or underground streams;
7 “(iii) any water that by itself does not
8 meet the definition in subparagraph (A);
9 “(iv) an intrastate water, unless meet-
10 ing the requirements of subparagraph (A);
11 “(v) a man-made channel or ditch, in-
12 cluding irrigation, distribution, and drain-
13 age systems;
14 “(vi) a water that does not meet the
15 definition in subparagraph (A), including a
16 water that in the past could have been a
17 water that meets the definition in subpara-
18 graph (A) or a water that in the future
19 could be a water that meets the definition
20 in subparagraph (A);
21 “(vii) a water that requires the use of
22 means beyond visual inspection by the
23 naked eye, including aerial photographs,
24 satellite imaging, or hydrological testing, to

1 determine if it meets the definition in sub-
2 paragraph (A);

3 “(viii) prior converted cropland; or
4 “(ix) waste treatment systems, includ-
5 ing systems created in or with impounded
6 waters described in subparagraph (A) and
7 all features and components of any system
8 designed to actively or passively retain or
9 reduce or remove pollutants from waste-
10 water or stormwater, including those that
11 convey the pollutants into and out of the
12 system.

13 “(C) CONTINUOUS SURFACE WATER CON-
14 NECTION.—For purposes of this paragraph, a
15 continuous surface water connection is a con-
16 nection with respect to which an ordinary per-
17 son would not be able to visually determine by
18 the naked eye, by looking at the water surface,
19 where one body of water ends and the other be-
20 gins.

21 “(D) RELATIVELY PERMANENT, STAND-
22 ING, OR CONTINUOUSLY FLOWING.—For pur-
23 poses of this paragraph, a water is relatively
24 permanent, standing, or continuously flowing if
25 it has continuous flow for at least 290 days of

1 the year, except in cases of extreme events,
2 such as a drought.

3 “(E) WETLANDS.—For purposes of this
4 paragraph, wetlands—

5 “(i) are areas that are inundated or
6 saturated by surface or ground water at a
7 frequency and duration sufficient to sup-
8 port, and that under normal circumstances
9 do support, a prevalence of vegetation typi-
10 cally adapted for life in saturated soil con-
11 ditions; and

12 “(ii) include swamps, marshes, bogs,
13 and similar areas.

14 “(F) PRIOR CONVERTED CROPLAND.—For
15 purposes of this paragraph, the term ‘prior con-
16 verted cropland’—

17 “(i) means areas that, prior to De-
18 cember 23, 1985, were drained or other-
19 wise manipulated for the purpose, or hav-
20 ing the effect, of making an agricultural
21 product possible, and that are inundated
22 for no more than 14 consecutive days dur-
23 ing the growing season; and

24 “(ii) includes agricultural drainage
25 features, including ditches and convey-

1 ances, that are the means by which the
2 original conversion from wetlands to crop-
3 land took place and that are integral to the
4 continued production of agricultural prod-
5 ucts by providing drainage or irrigation to
6 maintain productive growing conditions.

7 “(G) JURISDICTIONAL DETERMINATION.—

8 The Secretary of the Army, at his cost, shall
9 provide a binding determination upon the re-
10 quest of a permit applicant, landowner, or other
11 affected person with an identifiable and sub-
12 stantial legal interest in a property, to deter-
13 mine whether a water is a navigable water
14 under clause (iv) of subparagraph (A). The re-
15 view process shall not exceed 60 days, begin-
16 ning on the date of receipt of a written request
17 from the affected person. If no determination
18 has been made within the 60 day review period,
19 the water shall not be considered a navigable
20 water. A determination that a water is not a
21 navigable water, or a failure to provide a deter-
22 mination, shall be binding on both the Sec-
23 retary and the Administrator for as long as the
24 person has an identifiable and substantial legal
25 interest in the property. If a determination is

1 made that a water is a navigable water, the de-
2 termination shall be binding for a period of no
3 longer than 5 years. The affected person may
4 obtain expedited judicial review not later than
5 30 days after the date on which the determina-
6 tion is made in a district court of the United
7 States, of appropriate jurisdiction and venue,
8 which is located within the State of the affected
9 person seeking the review.”.

