

Today's News
Today's News
This Issue
Letters to the Editor
The Lighter Side
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Oppose the Clean Water Authority Restoration Act

By Don Parmeter

February 17, 2007



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There are bills moving rapidly through Congress and the Minnesota legislature aimed at taking away more of your freedoms and your way of life. Many of these bills have bi-partisan support, and many leaders of both parties are jumping on the bandwagon to 'save the planet.' This is a popular notion these days, but many legislators are not even reading the bills to understand the harm they can do - to both the economy and the environment.

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The most dangerous legislation of all is the Clean Water Authority Restoration Act (H.R.1356 and S. 912), known as the Oberstar-Feingold bill. This sweeping legislation would expand the authority of the federal government under the 1972 Federal Water Pollution Control Act. Simply, the bill expands the definition of waters from 'navigable' to 'all' waters of the United States, including:

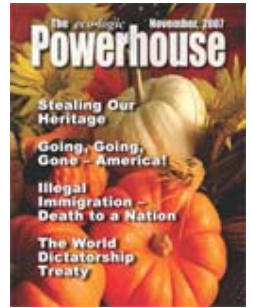
- * Wetlands
- * Streams (including intermittent streams)
- * Sloughs
- * Mudflats
- * Sandflats
- * Prairie Potholes
- * Playa Lakes
- * Natural Ponds

And Get This....

The bill extends to 'Activities affecting these waters!' This is known as 'non-point source pollution control'-- simply put, anything that doesn't come out of a pipe. As a wise professor of Environmental Studies at George Washington University said over 30 years ago, "Wait until they (the federal government) get around to controlling non-point source pollution." Well, they're getting around to now - if they can get away with it.

This bill is not about clean water. It is about the unprecedented expansion of

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federal control over land, water and people. And it's about overturning recent decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court that were favorable to local citizens and local government (SWANCC v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Rapanos v. United States).

What you can do:

1. Contact your federal and state legislators, governor, local elected officials (mayors, council members, county commissioners, township officials) and tell them to help "slow down the train" and specifically tell them to oppose the Oberstar-Feingold bill.
2. Bring this to the attention of organizations that are concerned about outdoor recreation, forestry, mining, agriculture, or access to and use of public and private lands and waters for any purpose.
3. Design and promote local alternatives such as the citizen-based plan underway for the Rainy/Lake of the Woods watershed in northern Minnesota.
4. Make a contribution to the American Property Coalition, in whatever amount you are able. We are a new, non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to conservation and to the protection of rights on public and private lands and waters.

Don Parmeter is the Executive Director of the American Property Coalition, 161 St. Anthony Ave., Ste. 935, St. Paul, MN 55103, (218) 285-7002.

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*Disclaimer:
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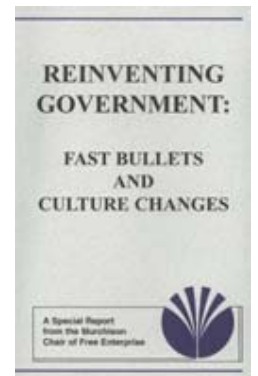


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