



washington dc update

Chairman Oberstar Announces Introduction of “America’s Commitment to Clean Water Act” Legislation

April 21, 2010

News Conference

To watch the video of the news conference, you can go to the following link:

<http://transportation.edgeboss.net/wmedia/transportation/20100421pr.vvx>

Chairman Jim Oberstar announced the introduction of HR 5088, the “America’s Commitment to Clean Water Act” at a press conference in the hearing room for the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. This is the long-awaited House version of S. 787. The Chairman was joined by several other Members of Congress and by representatives of local government and stakeholder groups who all warmly endorsed the bill.

In his remarks, Mr. Oberstar divided the history of the Clean Water Act into two periods. The first was the 28 years between the passage of the original Act and the Cooke County decision in 2001 and then the period from 2001 to the present which was characterized as years of confusion and uncertainty in protecting America’s waters. And he pledged to future generations that the Clean Water Act would not be allowed to be rolled back by polluters and special interests.

HR 5088 contains exclusions for wastewater treatment plants and it excludes groundwater from the jurisdiction under the legislation. But it does remove the term “navigable” from the Clean Water Act and instead creates a much more expansive view of what constitutes “waters of the US.” Mr. Oberstar repeatedly asserted that all those parties who truly care about clean water should be supportive of HR 5088.

T&I Committee Republicans countered that the bill represents an unwarranted expansion into the private property of many millions of Americans by a Federal government working under a new definition of what constitutes a “waters of the US”. We have attached the press releases of both Chairman Oberstar and also Ranking Republican Mica of Florida so that WESTCAS members can get an idea of both sides of this bill.

Over the coming days we will share this legislation with you and work with the WESTCAS Legislative Committee to develop a timely and appropriate response from our organization.

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