

# ASSAULT ON CLEAN WATER THREATENS SOUTH CAROLINA

**DESPITE THE FUNDAMENTAL NECESSITY OF CLEAN WATER**, politicians in Washington are trying to dismantle the Clean Water Act, which has kept our nation's waters clean for nearly 50 years. This bedrock environmental safeguard is a central tool used by state and local governments to shield and protect clean water needed for healthy communities and families. Without it, polluted waters would threaten South Carolina's local economies, communities, and way of life.

Allowing open dumping into upstream waters spells trouble for everyone downstream. Pollution dumped by industry flows from smaller streams into our rivers and lakes, across state lines, and downriver, contaminating waters used by families and communities for drinking and recreation. The best way to protect clean water is to stop harmful pollution at its source, before it reaches our waterways.

If the administration's proposal becomes law, more than half of the stream miles in the United States are at risk.<sup>1</sup> In the South, this proposal puts at risk the drinking water sources for over 32 million people, or seven out of ten southerners.<sup>2</sup> A host of upstream waters such as smaller streams and wetlands would be at risk of pollution and fill under the proposal. Estimates show it would end protections for most of the 110 million acres of wetlands in the contiguous United States.<sup>3</sup>

## WHAT'S AT STAKE IN SOUTH CAROLINA?

This proposal threatens to remove protections from drinking water sources for 200 million Americans,<sup>4</sup> including the drinking water for three of every five South Carolinians.<sup>5</sup>



## CLEAN WATER IS BIG BUSINESS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

 **\$19.1 BILLION**  
FROM TOURISM INDUSTRY

 **\$649 MILLION**  
FROM LOCAL BREWERIES

 **\$686 MILLION**  
SPENT ON FISHING

 **\$2 BILLION**  
SPENT ON WILDLIFE RECREATION

 **\$14.7 MILLION**  
FROM COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN

 **\$40.5 MILLION**  
FROM SEAFOOD INDUSTRY

Under the proposal by the administration and supported by industrial polluters, more than 31,000 miles of streams that flow into South Carolina's rivers, lakes, and coastal waters would be at risk for pollution if the Clean Water Act is cut as the administration suggests.<sup>6</sup>

Millions of acres of wetlands in South Carolina that provide flood protection, filter pollution, and provide essential wildlife habitat are at risk.<sup>7</sup>

At least sixty-six percent of South Carolinians

get their drinking water from sources that rely on small streams that may lose critical Clean Water Act protections under the administration's proposal.<sup>8</sup>

## ECONOMIC IMPACTS FOR SOUTH CAROLINA

By EPA's own estimates, their proposal will put at risk at least \$339 million and up to \$572 million annually in benefits to Americans, including reducing flooding, filtering pollution, providing wildlife habitat, and supporting hunting and fishing.<sup>9</sup>

Development in water-absorbing wetlands and flood prone areas were largely responsible for the \$2 billion in damages from the 2015 flood inflicted on South Carolina.<sup>10</sup> Stripping wetland protections will increase damage from floods in South Carolina.

Protecting small streams and wetlands supports fish and wildlife and South Carolina's vibrant recreational industry. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reports that in 2011 \$2.0 billion was spent on wildlife related recreation in South Carolina, including \$686 million on fishing, and more than 1.7 million people participated in wildlife related recreational activities.<sup>11</sup>

In 2015, over a million recreational anglers took 2.6 million trips in South Carolina. The recreational fishing industry supported 6,900 jobs and added \$396,858,000 to our state's economy.<sup>12</sup>

South Carolina's seafood industry added \$40.5 million to our state's economy in 2015, including 7.2 million pounds of shellfish brought to shore by commercial fishermen that generated \$14.7 million.<sup>13</sup>

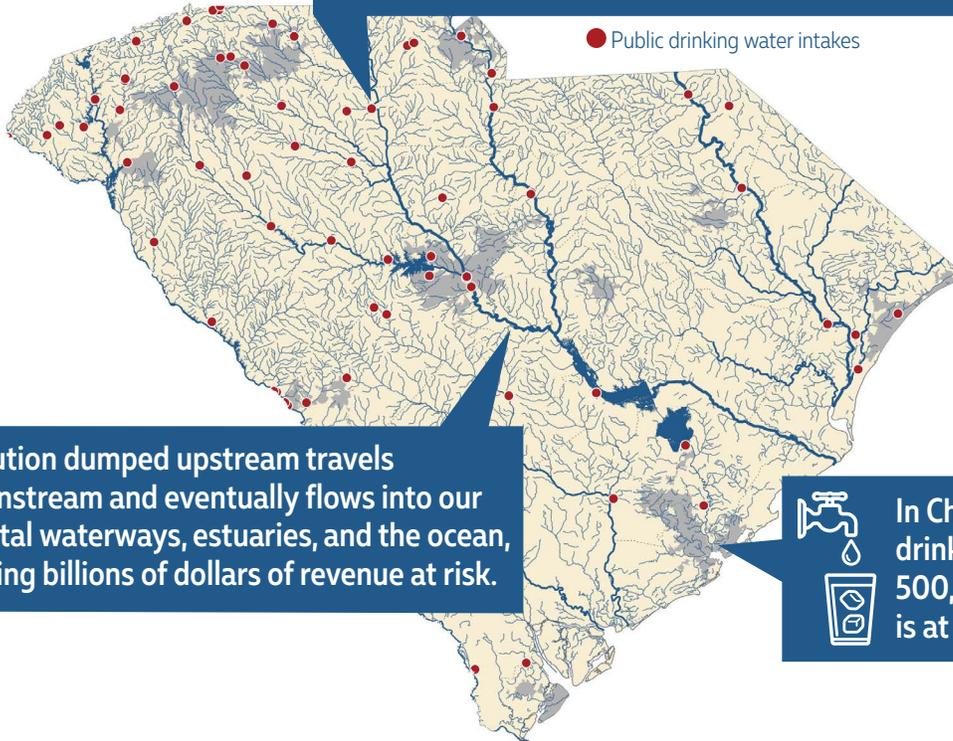


South Carolina's thriving brewing industry relies on clean water. Small South Carolina breweries contribute more than \$649 million to our economy every year and support 4,042 jobs.<sup>14</sup>

Clean water is a way of life in South Carolina, from our mountain streams, to our rivers and lakes, down to our marshes and coast –and our \$19.1 billion tourism industry is dependent on it.<sup>15</sup>

## SOUTH CAROLINA'S COMMUNITIES ARE INTERCONNECTED WITH WATERWAYS

Most people in South Carolina get their drinking water from surface water intakes connected to rivers and streams.



● Public drinking water intakes



Pollution dumped upstream travels downstream and eventually flows into our coastal waterways, estuaries, and the ocean, putting billions of dollars of revenue at risk.



In Charleston, the drinking water for over 500,000 people is at risk.

For more information please visit [ProtectSouthernWater.org](https://ProtectSouthernWater.org)

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). 2013. Water: Streams. Accessed at <https://archive.epa.gov/water/archive/web/html/streams.html>.

<sup>2,4,5,8</sup> Calculations from EPA Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS). 2017. Accessed at <https://ofmpub.epa.gov/apex/sfdw/f?p=108:1::NO::>; AND U.S. Census Bureau (USCB). 2017. National and State Population Estimates. Accessed at <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-kits/2017/estimates-demographics.html>

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). 2009. Status and Trends of Wetlands in the Conterminous United States 2004 – 2009. p37. Accessed at <https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/documents/Status-and-Trends-of-Wetlands-in-the-Conterminous-United-States-2004-to-2009.pdf>

<sup>6,7</sup> EPA and U.S. Department of the Army. 2018. Economic Analysis for the Proposed Revised Definition of "Waters of the United States". p219-221. Accessed at [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-12/documents/wotusproposedrule\\_ea\\_final\\_2018-12-14.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-12/documents/wotusproposedrule_ea_final_2018-12-14.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> EPA and U.S. Department of the Army. 2015. Economic Analysis of the EPA-Army Clean Water Rule. p53-54. Accessed at [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-06/documents/508-final\\_clean\\_water\\_rule\\_economic\\_analysis\\_5-20-15.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-06/documents/508-final_clean_water_rule_economic_analysis_5-20-15.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Smith, Adam et al. 2018. U.S. Billion-Dollar Weather & Climate Disasters 1980-2018. NOAA. Accessed at <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/billions/events.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau. 2011. National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation – South Carolina. p 5-8. Accessed at <https://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/fhw11-sc.pdf>

<sup>12,13</sup> National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). 2015. Fisheries Economics of the United States. U.S. Dept. of Commerce, NOAA. p154 -155. Accessed at <https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/16121>

<sup>14</sup> Brewers Association. 2016. Economic Impact by State. Accessed at <https://www.brewersassociation.org/statistics/economic-impact-data/>.

<sup>15</sup> South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism (SCPRT). 2017. Tourism is Now a \$19.1 Billion Industry in South Carolina. Accessed at <https://www.scprrt.com/articles/tourism-is-now-a-19-billion-industry-in-south-carolina>.