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CENTER**

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The assault on clean water threatens South Carolina.

DESPITE THE FUNDAMENTAL NECESSITY OF CLEAN WATER, the previous administration dismantled the longstanding safeguards of the Clean Water Act, which has kept our nation's waters clean for nearly 50 years. This bedrock environmental law is a central tool used by state and local governments to shield and protect clean water needed for healthy communities, businesses, and families. Without its protections, polluted waters threaten South Carolina's local economies, communities, and way of life. **It is urgent that EPA restore strong clean water protections.**

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.

Clean water is big business in South Carolina.



\$23.8 billion from the tourism industry



\$2 billion spent on wildlife recreation



\$660 million from local breweries



\$686 million spent on fishing

The Trump administration's removal of federal clean water protections in 2020* left up to half of the nation's stream miles,¹ over 45 million wetland acres,² and many important public recreational lakes and drinking water reservoirs³ vulnerable to pollution and destruction by industry. In the South, the removal risks the drinking water sources for over 35 million people, or three out of four Southerners.⁴



WHAT'S AT STAKE IN SOUTH CAROLINA?

The prior administration's removal of federal protections threatens drinking water sources for 217 million Americans,⁵ including the drinking water for three out of every five South Carolinians.⁶ For example, Lake Keowee, a draw for tourism and drinking water source for hundreds of thousands of people in Seneca and Greenville, is vulnerable to pollution because the prior administration removed protections from lakes developed as cooling water reservoirs for utilities. Monticello Reservoir also is vulnerable. Under the rule, supported by industrial polluters who continue to litigate to uphold it, more than 31,000 miles of streams that flow into South Carolina's rivers, lakes, and coastal waters are at risk.⁷

Millions of acres of wetlands in South Carolina that provide flood protection, filter pollution, and provide essential wildlife habitat are at risk under the 2020 rule.⁸ In Charleston Harbor alone, more than 150,000 acres of wetlands are at risk, and in the Saluda and Congaree

River watersheds more than 60,000 acres of wetlands are vulnerable.⁹ A proposed 6,000-acre multi-use development next to Savannah River National Wildlife Refuge would destroy hundreds of acres of wetlands that the rule removed from federal protection.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS FOR SOUTH CAROLINA

By EPA's own estimates, the rule put at risk at least \$339 million and up to \$572 million annually in benefits to Americans, including the value of streams' and wetlands' capacity to reduce flooding, filter pollution, provide wildlife habitat, and support hunting and fishing.¹⁰

Development in water-absorbing wetlands and flood prone areas was largely responsible for the \$2 billion in damages from the 2015 flood inflicted on South Carolina.¹¹ Stripping wetland protections will increase damage from floods in South Carolina.

Protecting small streams and wetlands sustains 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 recreation in South Carolina, including \$686 million on fishing, and more than 1.7 million people participated in wildlife related recreational activities in South Carolina.¹²

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.¹³

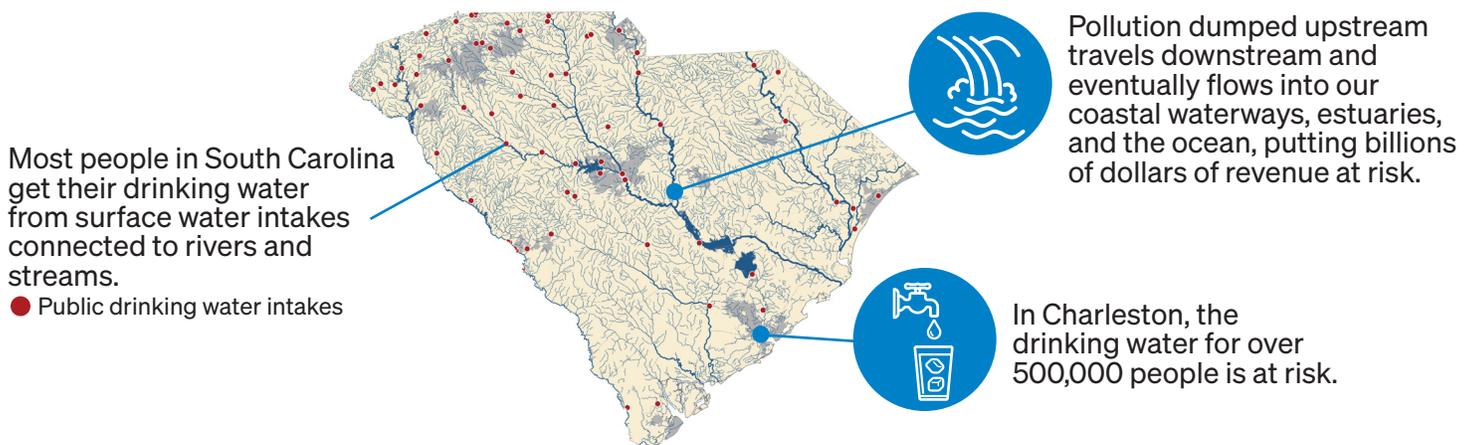


South Carolina's seafood industry added \$40.5 million to our state's economy in 2015, including 7.2 million pounds of shellfish brought to shore by commercial fishermen that generated \$14.7 million.¹⁴

South Carolina's thriving brewing industry relies on clean water. Small South Carolina breweries contribute more than \$660 million to our economy every year and support 4,801 jobs.¹⁵

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 \$23.8 billion tourism industry is dependent on it.¹⁶

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://www.protectsouthernwater.org).

* Two federal courts vacated the Trump administration's unlawful rule as of October 15, 2021. Until litigation is final, there is a risk that the 2020 rule could be reinstated. At the time of this writing, protections for streams and wetlands remain in jeopardy.