The assault on clean water threatens Virginia.

**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 Virginia’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 Virginia.**

- **$3.5 billion** spent on wildlife recreation
- **$1.1 billion** spent on fishing
- **$1.3 billion** from local breweries
- **$630.8 million** from local wineries

**WHAT’S AT STAKE IN VIRGINIA?**
The prior administration’s removal of federal protections threatens drinking water sources for 217 million Americans, including the drinking water for three of every four Virginians. Under the rule, supported by industrial polluters who continue to litigate to uphold it, more than 55,000 miles of streams that flow into Virginia’s rivers, lakes, and coastal waters are at risk.

In Virginia’s Rappahannock and James River watersheds alone, over one hundred thousand acres of wetlands that provide flood protection, filter pollution, provide essential wildlife habitat, and protect cherished resources such as the Chesapeake Bay, are at risk under the 2020 rule.
ECONOMIC IMPACTS FOR VIRGINIA

By EPA's own estimates, the rule puts 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. Protecting small streams and wetlands sustains fish and wildlife and Virginia’s vibrant recreational industry. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reports that in 2011 $3.5 billion was spent on wildlife recreation in Virginia, including $1.1 billion on fishing, and more than 3.3 million people participated in wildlife related recreational activities in Virginia.

Virginia’s thriving brewing and winery industries rely on clean water. Small Virginia breweries contribute more than $1.3 billion to our economy every year and support 10,246 jobs. Similarly, wineries and vineyards contribute at least $630.8 million, sustain 8,218 livelihoods and rank 1st in economic activity in the South.

Virginia’s communities are interconnected with waterways.

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

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 Hampton Roads, the drinking water for over 1.6 million people is at risk.

For more information, please visit 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.

Footnotes can be found at: https://www.southernenvironment.org/cleanwaterva/