



**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**

**Washington, DC 20515**

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**Don Young**  
Chairman

**James L. Oberstar**  
Ranking Democratic Member

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Dear Democratic Colleague:

October 18<sup>th</sup> marks the 32nd anniversary of the Clean Water Act. In recognition of the anniversary, I prepared the attached report, *Progress Made, Progress Lost: The Bush Administration and the Anniversary of the Clean Water Act*. This report describes the environmental successes that have been achieved by the Act, and demonstrates how the Bush Administration has undermined progress in meeting the goals of fishable and swimmable waters. The report also details the Administration's actions to weaken enforcement of the Act, its acquiescence to increased destruction of U.S. waters, and its ambivalence or opposition to necessary changes to ensure continued progress in cleaning up the Nation's waters.

During the last four years, the Bush Administration has ignored numerous reports, including one from the Environmental Protection Agency, which conclude that unless the Nation commits to increased investment in maintaining and enhancing its aging wastewater treatment infrastructure, waters will be more polluted than existed prior to the Clean Water Act in 1972. Despite the Administration's opposition to legislation that would help repair and replace vital wastewater treatment infrastructure, Democrats worked with Republicans of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure to develop bipartisan legislation (H.R. 1560) to enhance the Federal commitment to wastewater infrastructure development. Unfortunately, the House Republican Leadership refused to schedule this bill for the Floor, and it will die in the Committee.

Clearly, the Nation has a choice – the final chapters on the Clean Water Act have yet to be written. The questions remain – which path will be followed? Should we be satisfied with the progress that has been made, and resign ourselves to the fact that we have already witnessed the peak in water quality as conditions worsen? Or should we demand that next steps be taken to clean America's waterways?

The answer depends as much on our commitment to finishing the job that began with passage of the Clean Water Act, as on ensuring that our elected officials either share these views or, at least, allow for these issues to be debated. Now, more than ever, we must reaffirm our commitment to restoring and protecting our Nation's greatest natural resource – our rivers, lakes, streams, coastal areas, and wetlands. We owe future generations no less.

I want you to have the report prior to its release to the press on Monday and hope that you find it useful.

Sincerely,

James L. Oberstar, M.C.  
Ranking Democratic Member