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Rep. McCord strips protections from 30,000 miles of stream

Places constituents in jeopardy of increasing drought effects

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(Nashville, TN) House Representative Joe McCord (R-Maryville) is sponsoring a bill commonly referred to "Limited Resource Water" that, if passed, would decrease the number of streams in our state by removing protections from 30,000 miles of streams. The House Environment and Conservation Committee was set to hear comments on the bill Wednesday, March 5. Those efforts were deferred due to a coalition of citizen groups lead by the TN Clean Water Network.

"I am shocked at Rep. McCord's attempt to remove protection from thousands of miles of Tennessee's streams," stated Renée Hoyos, TN Clean Water Network Executive Director. "It is especially disturbing because his district felt the affects of drought this summer."

"I encourage Rep. McCord to remove this bill from consideration. His district needs him to protect their drinking water, not give it away to interests who want to bury streams for profit while his district goes thirsty."

Rep. McCord's bill removes protections from 30,000 miles of stream in Tennessee. Streams that feed larger streams and rivers that supply our drinking water and support fisheries that guarantee tourism dollars to this state.

McCord's bill has the potential to increase the effects of drought that his neighbors in Maryville felt so hard last summer. That is because headwater streams that feed our larger rivers, would be exempt from protection. Thereby allowing industry to destroy, pave over or pollute the feeder streams without any repercussions.

In the past month, the drought had Maryville mandating water restrictions for the first time in two decades.

It appears an irresponsible group of industries that benefit financially from polluting are the impetus behind McCord's bill. They include the Homebuilders Association and the Roadbuilder's Association.

This group cited farmer's interests as the need for the "limited resource water" bill. However, this is not the case in TCWN's experience with over sixteen communities across the state representing thousands of miles of stream.

“The farmers we work with cite pollution from over development as the number one threat to their farms. Farmers are surrounded by over development that has caused flooding and loss of water to their farms,” added Hoyos.

The House Environment and Conservation Committee will discuss the bill Wednesday, March 12.

Tennessee Clean Water Network is Tennessee’s only statewide organization solely dedicated to protecting clean water by organizing Tennesseans to claim our right to clean water through fostering civic engagement, building coalitions and advancing clean water policy for a sustainable future.

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