



COALITION ON THE ENVIRONMENT
AND JEWISH LIFE

For Immediate Release:

May 27, 2015

Contact: Jonathan Gilad

Communications Manager

jgilad@thejcpa.org

202-212-6031; 914-500-3146(c)

Protect Our Nation's Drinking Water

JCPA and COEJL Support the EPA's New WOTUS Rule

Washington, D.C. - The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) and its initiative, the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL), strongly support the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) new rule clarifying the definition of "Waters of the United States" within the Clean Water Act (CWA). This new rule, which the EPA will finalize this week, will clarify CWA protections to include smaller streams, tributaries and wetlands. Prior to this rule change, legal challenges to the CWA left unprotected an estimated 20 million acres of wetlands and 59% of our streams. These waters were subsequently vulnerable to pollution, dumping and contamination – threatening our nation's water supply.

"Clean drinking water is one of the most basic necessities for us and our communities. We depend upon clean drinking water for our health and the very substance of our being. Without this precious resource our communities will simply be unlivable. By issuing this rule, the EPA has provided clarity regarding enforcement of the law and the danger of contamination," said Rabbi Steve Gutow, President of JCPA and Chair of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment.

"As Jews, citizens, and water drinkers, we are all relieved and grateful that the EPA will expand protections for these waters. Our faith puts high value both on human welfare and on protection of nature's bounty, and this clarification is a significant step towards fulfilling those values," said Rabbi Fred Scherlinder Dobb, Chair of COEJL.

JCPA, the public affairs arm of the organized Jewish community, serves as the national coordinating and advisory body for the 14 national and 125 local agencies comprising the field of Jewish community relations.

COEJL has been an initiative of the [Jewish Council for Public Affairs](#) since 1993 and serves as the Jewish partner in the [National Religious Partnership on the Environment](#). Today, COEJL's

priorities are to mobilize the Jewish community to address the climate crisis through advocacy for appropriate legislation as well as action to reduce our own greenhouse gas emissions.

##