

Washington, D.C. - Representative David Price (D-NC) gave the following remarks for the record during House consideration of a Republican measure weakening the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to enforce the Clean Water Act. Rep. Price and other Democrats dubbed the bill, the "Dirty Water Act". The House passed the bill by a 239-184 vote. The text of Rep. Price's remarks is below.

"Today, the House is considering H.R. 2018, the so-called Clean Water Cooperative Federalism Act. This bill, which represents the latest attempt by the House to weaken the Environmental Protection Agency, could just as easily be called the 'Dirty Water Act.'

"Since 1972, the Clean Water Act, which is one of the nation's most successful and effective environmental laws, has protected the waterways Americans depend on for fishing, swimming, and clean drinking water. H.R. 2018 would overturn almost 40 years of federal protection by preventing the Environmental Protection Agency from safeguarding public health and protecting water quality. It also would undermine the agency's authority to ensure that state water quality standards comply with the law. What's at stake here is not federal oversight versus state's rights, but rather clean water versus dirty water.

"In case anyone is wondering why the Congress might consider such a bill, consider this example: coal companies want to conduct mountaintop removal mining in Appalachia and dump the waste they generate into Appalachia's streams and waterways. The EPA has rightly declined to classify this waste as fill material. Should the financial interests of a few coal companies outweigh the environmental and public health interests of the people of the entire region?

"Rather than weakening our federal clean water protection laws, we should be strengthening these laws to protect our oceans, rivers, lakes and streams. I urge my colleagues to vote against H.R. 2018."

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