



Alabama Rivers Alliance
Water Is Life

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**Released on Rivers of Alabama Day, A New Report Shows Waters in Alabama and
Across Nation Losing Protections From Pollution**

Elected Officials Urged to Get Congress to Fix the Broken Clean Water Act

Birmingham, AL— Federal documents obtained by environmental groups reveal that US Supreme Court decisions have eliminated or undermined federal Clean Water Act protections for streams, wetlands, lakes and rivers across the nation. In a report released today, the groups provide 30 case studies demonstrating how the federal Clean Water Act is broken and calling on Senators and Representatives to fix it. The report, titled “*Courting Disaster: How the Supreme Court Has Broken the Clean Water Act and Why Congress Must Fix It.*” is available at www.alabamarivers.org.

Today, the 2nd Tuesday of April, was officially designated as Rivers of Alabama Day by the Alabama state legislature in 2007. This report is a poignant reminder of how vulnerable our essential life-giving waterways have become.

“The Courts’ decisions have swept away 30 years of protection for some of our nation’s most important waters,” said Nelson Brooke, the Black Warrior Riverkeeper, “Polluters have been given a green light to ignore the Clean Water Act, even when it may affect drinking water supplies.”

“Because of the bad Supreme Court decisions, waters in Alabama are at risk,” said Lowry. “Congress must act quickly to pass the Clean Water Restoration Act, legislation that will restore federal Clean Water Act protections for all of the waters that were protected before the law was broken.”

One of the case studies highlighted in the report is in Birmingham, Alabama. In late October 2007 the court reversed the 2005 convictions of McWane, Inc. and three company officials on criminal charges related to the illegal discharge of pollutants including oil, lead, and zinc to Avondale Creek, which flows into Village Creek. Village Creek is a main tributary of the Black Warrior River’s Locust Fork.

The groups releasing the report emphasized that pollution of headwater streams and wetlands leads to greater pollution and flooding for downstream communities. The EPA has estimated that some 20 million acres of wetlands in the continental United States may lose federal protection. In addition, tens of thousands of miles of seasonal and headwater streams and countless numbers of small lakes, and ponds could be left without federal protection from water pollution.

“Congress must pass the Clean Water Restoration Act now,” said Lowry. “Alabama cannot afford to lose federal protections against pollution of our precious water resources.” For more information on the Rapanos case and other similar cases with Clean Water Act ramifications, visit <http://blackwarriorriver.org/rapanos.html>.

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Black Warrior Riverkeeper is a non-profit organization whose mission is to protect and restore the Black Warrior River and its tributaries. Contact: Nelson Brooke (205) 458-0095

Alabama Rivers Alliance is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to protect and restore state rivers through water quality and quantity policy advocacy, restoration planning, grassroots organizing, and watershed education in order to achieve clean and healthy watershed ecosystems, healthy people, strong economies, and a functioning democratic system of government in Alabama. Contact: Cindy Lowry (205) 322-6395