

Alliance for the Great Lakes ♦ American Fisheries Society ♦ American Land Conservancy ♦ American Littoral Society ♦ American Sportfishing Association ♦ Audubon ♦ Chesapeake Bay Foundation ♦ Clean Water Action ♦ Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana ♦ Conservation Law Foundation ♦ Copper River Watershed Project ♦ Elizabeth River Project ♦ Environment America ♦ Everglades Foundation ♦ Friends And Volunteers Of Refuges, Florida Keys ♦ Friends of Merrymeeting Bay ♦ Friends of the Bay ♦ Green Living & Energy Education ♦ Gulf of Mexico Foundation, Inc. ♦ Kennebec Estuary Land Trust ♦ Lake Superior Greens ♦ League of Conservation Voters ♦ Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership ♦ Muskegon River Watershed Assembly ♦ National Estuarine Research Reserve Association ♦ National Wildlife Federation ♦ New York/New Jersey Baykeeper ♦ North Carolina Coastal Federation ♦ The Ocean Foundation ♦ People For Puget Sound ♦ Restore America's Estuaries ♦ Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation ♦ Save The Bay – San Francisco ♦ SeeGrass Grow ♦ Sheepscot Valley Conservation Association ♦ Sierra Club ♦ The Trust for Public Land ♦ Wildlife Forever

April 14, 2010

RE: Clean Estuaries Act of 2010 (HR 4715)

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters nationwide, we are writing to express our support for the Clean Estuaries Act of 2010 (HR 4715), which would reauthorize the National Estuary Program (NEP) and provide enhanced tools to improve the restoration and protection of our nation's estuaries.

Estuaries are coastal transition zones between fresh water from rivers and saline water from oceans. These unique ecosystems protect water quality and provide a buffer against erosion which protects our coastal communities during extreme weather events. Also, healthy estuaries provide recreational opportunities, essential wildlife habitat, and commercial and recreational fishing.

The Clean Estuaries Act ensures that our nation's estuaries will better protect our communities and preserve wildlife habitat by:

- Requiring that estuaries in the NEP identify vulnerabilities to climate change and plan for adaptation responses
- Requiring that each approved estuary program be evaluated every four years and the results be publicly released
- Increasing federal attention to local priorities and requiring federal agencies to participate in the planning process
- Increasing the authorization for the program from \$35 million to \$50 million annually for fiscal years 2011 through 2016

Since estuaries are important to our public health and our wildlife, and play a major role in creating jobs and boosting local economies, we highly discourage new oil and gas

exploration and development in NEP areas. This type of development would be inconsistent with the goals and purpose of the NEP.

Funding and strengthening the NEP will protect the nation's estuaries from pollution, development and overuse. Protecting our nation's estuaries helps ensure clean water for our communities and a healthy environment for wildlife. We encourage you to support the Clean Estuaries Act of 2010 without any weakening amendments.

Sincerely,

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