

**EPA Public Meeting of the EPA Science Advisory Board  
Comments by Elizabeth Tatham  
September 29, 2014**

**Re: Clean Water Rule Docket ID # EPA-HQ-OW-20011-0880**

**Thank you. I am Elizabeth Tatham, a citizen of Pennsylvania and a stakeholder in the EPA Study on the Potential Impact of Hydraulic Fracturing on Drinking Water Resources since 2010 when I testified on the design of that study.**

**I appreciate the EPA's efforts to restore protections which the Clean Water Act had provided for wetlands and small streams in the first three decades after President Nixon signed the Act in 1972. I now strongly urge the Science Advisory Board, the EPA and the Civil Works Department of the Army to adopt the proposed Rule defining the Waters of the United States with one exception and that is the categorical elimination of groundwater as a water of the United States because it is not visually connected to surface water. On that point I fully agree with Dr. Faustman and the speaker who followed her. Aquifers are not always shallow, the Wilcox Aquifer runs 5,000 feet deep in some places.**

**This Rule is especially important now because legislators in numerous states are under significant pressure from various industries and their supporters to weaken or eliminate laws that have provided protection for our most vulnerable streams and wetlands in the past. Because of their small size, many people are unaware of the great significance headwaters and other tributary streams and our wetlands have on the quality of our drinking water, our health and the health and survival of aquatic life.**

**Citizens of Pennsylvania are especially in need of the proposed Rule since both houses of our Assembly voted last week to remove the protection of our High Quality and Exceptional Value Streams by making the 150 foot wide vegetated riparian buffers that were mandated for a number of years, "optional." This legislative action which is expected to become law in a couple of weeks will allow removal of the ecological structure that is needed to support our healthiest streams and thus, the drinking water of millions of Pennsylvanians. In addition, some protection from flood damage will be reduced in many areas.**

**Pennsylvania depends on clean water in our streams, wetlands, lakes and rivers not only for health, but also for economic reasons. Hundreds of thousands of jobs and close to half a billion dollars in income is generated each year by fishing, hunting, eco-tourism, camping, and related businesses. Most important of all, please think of the babies in utero and very young children who are at highest risk of cancer and other illnesses from pollutants because of their small body weight and developmental stage.**

**In summary, when we can't count on state laws to provide the protection needed to keep our waterways safe, the EPA is our only hope! Please consider making the change which I just recommended on underground water connectivity and then I hope you will urge Administrator McCarthy and Assistant Secretary Darcy of the Army CORPS to implement the proposed Rule on the "Definition of Waterways of the United States."**

**Thank you for the opportunity to provide this input.**

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