



washington dc update

Latest New York Times Story from Charles Duhigg

March 1, 2010

Casting Blame?

The NYT article cites New York as an example of a now unprotected watershed, but its lack of protection is due to more to lack of water filtration than being “outside the CWA reach.”

Asst. Commissioner Tierney’s comments should be considered with the following facts:

- The New York City watershed is the largest unfiltered drinking water supply in the nation.
- *“By protecting the watershed at its source, we avoid spending the estimated \$8 billion to \$10 billion to build a filtration plant and the \$400 million in annual maintenance and operation costs.”* New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Pete Grannis, July 2007

This morning, the New York Times WESTCAS members have followed these stories with great interest. Today’s article, which focuses on S. 787, the Clean Water Restoration Act, is an attempt to regain traction for this legislation that is currently stalled in Congress.

Despite the issues raised in the article, we continue to believe that there likely is not enough time left in the 111th Congress for this legislation to proceed much further than where it currently is which is to have been passed out of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and awaiting action on the Senate floor. At least three Senators have placed holds on the bill which means that extensive floor time would have to be devoted to move the bill forward. There currently is no companion legislation in the House.

In today’s article, Mr. Duhigg expands on his methodology of citing environmental horrors which are the result of lapsed regulatory oversight and suggesting that this can only be addressed by increased regulation mandated by the Congress and implemented to Federal agencies. The specific issue here is the uncertainty of how to define “navigable waters” and how these waters should be regulated. Mr. Duhigg suggests that S. 787 is the best single step to address this question.

WESTCAS members have read the NY Times articles written by Mr. Duhigg with a keen interest and from your perspective of being the true experts in this field. Since the intent of this article is not just to inform the public but rather to push S. 787 forward, we ask that you read today’s article with great care and a fair yet critical eye.

See article at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/01/us/01water.html?pagewanted=1&emc=eta1>

Contact Fred or Tom

Fred Hicks – 703.626.5384	Tom Ray – 254.855.0880
P.O. Box 2115	P.O. Box 955
Springfield, VA 22152-0115	Waco, TX 76703-0955
fbhicks@aol.com	tom@hicks-ray.com

