



January 31, 2017

**Re: Trout Unlimited (TU) opposes the CRA Resolution against the Stream Protection Rule**

On Wednesday the House is expected to take up the CRA resolution (H.J. Res. 107) to terminate the Stream Protection Rule (RIN: 1029-AC63). The resolution is an ill-conceived tool for jettisoning a useful rule that will protect mountain headwater streams and communities throughout coal country in the Appalachians. TU urges you to oppose it, and instead to work with the Department of the Interior to review the stream protection rule and make any necessary improvements, a far better approach than using the CRA meat cleaver.

TU's 155,000 passionate trout anglers work to conserve, protect and restore the nation's trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds. Our members give back to the resource they love by investing dollars and hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours to conserve streams and rivers.

As you think about the impacts of this CRA, we urge you to think about the impacts of mine pollution that TU members, staff, and partners have been working hard to clean up. In the East, pollution from abandoned coal mines continues to damage thousands of miles of streams and rivers — over 10,000 miles just within Pennsylvania and West Virginia. We know firsthand how hard it is to clean up the mess. It is far better to avoid a mess in the first place. That is the singular purpose of the Stream Protection Rule.

The Stream Protection Rule creates important safeguards for streams, fisheries and communities in coal country. Finalized in December 2016, the rule took nearly a decade to craft and was the first major update to surface mining regulations since President Reagan's Administration.

The Rule would curtail the devastating impacts of mountaintop removal coal mining on rivers and streams. Mountaintop removal mining has buried or degraded nearly 2,000 miles of Appalachian streams to date. It has also caused additional harm to downstream areas by introducing sediment pollution, altering stream hydrology and increasing the severity of floods.

Mountaintop removal mining practices create a survival risk for brook trout and other wild trout populations, and impede efforts to restore brook trout in already degraded watersheds. Many streams in the Appalachian Mountains subject to mountaintop removal mining are, or historically were, habitat for brook trout. Brook trout, and the vibrant sport fisheries they sustain, currently live in only a fraction of their historic range.

The Rule will also ensure that mine operators and state and federal regulators make use of the most current science and technology. And importantly, it will ensure that land disturbed by mining operations is restored to a functioning condition that it was capable of supporting prior to mining.

TU members live and work throughout coal country. We understand the importance of coal to the Nation. Trout Unlimited also understands that coal mining will occur in Appalachia into the foreseeable future.

---

**A mission to conserve, protect, & restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.**

National Office: 1777 N Kent St., Suite 100, Arlington, VA 22209  
T: (703) 284-9406 F: (703) 284-9400 smoyer@tu.org www.tu.org

But there are better ways to access coal seams than blowing off the tops of mountains and dumping the mine waste into adjacent valleys and streams. Filling in headwater streams defies economic, social, and ecological logic. Moreover, it is harmful to the health of the streams and the people who live downstream from these waste sites.

Trout Unlimited is working with state and federal regulators, communities and sportsmen in coal country to restore streams damaged by the impacts of abandoned coal mine pollution. We have had some great success at cleaning up streams, especially in Pennsylvania. We know first-hand that it is *far* better to avoid coal mine pollution up front, and *not* have to do the hard restoration work later.

The CRA resolution will obliterate efforts of the Interior Department to end the dreadful harm caused by mountaintop removal of coal. We urge you to oppose it.

Contact:

Steve Moyer, Vice President for Government Affairs, Trout Unlimited, [smoyer@tu.org](mailto:smoyer@tu.org), (703) 284-9406