

Dear Members of Congress,

Clean water is essential for America's booming outdoor recreation economy. Supporting over \$887 billion in consumer spending and 5.2 million jobs, this industry is here to stay and will continue to support communities across the country.

Everything from commercial river recreation to rafting, kayaking, to wildlife viewing, hunting, fishing and more, depend on the cold, clean waters that course through our streams and rivers, and fill our wetlands and lakes. Unfortunately, many miles of those waterways are impaired by pollution from abandoned mines. We write to you today to urge your support for Good Samaritan legislation that would speed up restoration of America's waterways degraded by abandoned mine pollution.

Over 110,000 stream miles in the U.S. are listed as impaired due to heavy metal concentrations and/or high acidity, with mine pollution being a significant contributing factor. Moreover, there are hundreds of thousands abandoned mines throughout the western United States, an estimated 33,000 of which are degrading the environment, including contaminating surface and groundwater.

While the Federal government can use a Superfund action to clean up some of these abandoned mines, Superfund only addresses the worst cases while hundreds of smaller abandoned mines bleed toxic pollutants every day. State agencies, county governments, conservation organizations and watershed groups want to tackle smaller cleanup efforts. However, under federal law, those who have no legal responsibility or connection to an abandoned mine – Good Samaritans – are deterred from cleaning up these messes due to the immense liability risks and onerous standards.

In most cases, these cleanups will greatly improve water quality, but meeting high EPA water quality standards may not be feasible nor cost effective, leaving the Good Samaritan on the hook, forever, for any remaining pollution. In short, the law doesn't distinguish between those who cause pollution and those who want to clean it up. The result is that these leaking abandoned mines continue to degrade our water, day after day, year after year.

We can solve this conundrum by passing legislation that provides bona fide Good Samaritans liability protections while also holding them accountable to terms of their permits. Abandoned mines are a big problem, but Good Samaritan legislation will allow qualified groups to help tackle work desperately needed across the U.S.

The undersigned outdoor recreation businesses and associations fully support Good Samaritan legislation and we urge you to double down on efforts to pass legislation in the 117th Congress.

(Example signers)

Outdoor Recreation Business XYZ

John Doe – Owner

Anytown, NM

Outdoor Recreation Association ABC

Jane Johnson – Executive Director

Another town, AZ