

June 20, 2024

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives

**RE: S. 2781/H.R. 7779 – The Good Samaritan Remediation of Abandoned Hardrock Mines Act of 2024**

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Johnson, and Minority Leader Jeffries:

Clean water is essential for America's booming outdoor recreation economy. Generating \$1.1 trillion in economic output and five 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, 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 in support of 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 metals 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 thousands 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 – true 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 federal water quality standards may not be feasible or cost effective, leaving the Good Samaritan on the hook – forever – for any remaining pollution. In short, the law does not 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 limited and targeted liability protections while also holding them accountable to the terms of their permits. Abandoned mines are a big problem, but Good Samaritan legislation will allow well-qualified groups to help tackle work desperately needed across the United States.

The undersigned outdoor recreation businesses and associations fully support S. 2781/H.R. 7779, the Good Samaritan Remediation of Abandoned Hardrock Mines Act of 2024. We thank you for your leadership and urge you to double down on efforts to pass this vital legislation in the 118th Congress.

Sincerely,

American Fly Fishing Trade Association (AFFTA)  
Bozeman, MT

Outdoor Recreation Roundtable  
Washington, D.C.

Outdoor Alliance  
Washington D.C.

California Outdoor Recreation Partnership  
Oakland, CA

EndeavOR New Mexico  
Farmington, NM

Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance  
Colorado Springs, CO

Granite Outdoor Alliance  
North Conway, NH

North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Coalition  
Raleigh, North Carolina

Idaho Business for the Outdoors  
Boise, ID

Northwest River Supplies (NRS)  
Moscow, ID

Orvis Fly Fishing Products  
Manchester, VT

Angling Trade Magazine  
Boulder, CO

Simms Fishing Products  
Bozeman, MT

Duranglers Flies & Supplies  
Durango, CO

Scott Fly Rods  
Montrose, CO

Fishpond USA  
Denver, CO

Ross Reels  
Montrose, CO

Sara Bella Fishing  
Erie, CO

Airflo Lines  
Montrose, CO

Abel Reels  
Montrose, CO

Stream Tech Boats  
Boise, ID

Pikes Peak Outdoors  
Colorado Springs, CO

Vedavoo  
Leominster, MA

RepYourWater  
Erie, CO

Bauer Fly Reels  
Twin Bridges, MT

San Juan Angler  
Durango, CO

RL Winston Fly Rods  
Twin Bridges, MT

RIGS Fly Shop  
Ridgway, CO

Fly Fishers International (FFI)  
Livingston, MT

Yellow Dog Fly Fishing Adventures  
Bozeman, MT

Taos Fly Shop  
Taos, NM

Mossy Creek Fly Fishing  
Harrisonburg, VA

AFFTA Fishery Fund  
Bozeman, MT

Adipose Boatworks  
Helena, MT

Dette Flies  
Livingston Manor, NY

Ramsey Outdoor  
Ramsey, NJ

North Fork Ranch Guide Service  
Shawnee, CO

Maxxon Outfitters  
Kent, WA

Anglers All  
Littleton, CO

TroutRoutes  
Minneapolis, MN

Equinox  
Sitka, AK

Fishski Provisions  
Valdez, NM

BEG Group  
Pittsburgh, PA

L4 Environmental  
Longmont, CO

Sage Fly Fishing Products  
Bainbridge Island, WA

Rio Fly Lines  
Bainbridge Island, WA

Outcast Sporting Gear  
Meridian, ID

First Lite  
Ketchum, ID

Elko Fly Shop  
Elko, NV

Rain Shadow Fly Fishing Promotions  
Warrenton, VA

Knot the Reel World Fly Fishing  
Richmond, VA

Eldredge Bros. Fly Shop  
York, ME

Unicoi Outfitters  
Helen, GA

Confluence Casting  
Gypsum, CO

Seek Outside  
Grand Junction, CO

Tenkara USA  
Boulder, CO

Umpqua Feather Merchants  
Louisville, CO

Tight Line Media  
Idaho Falls, Idaho

The Caddis Fly Angling Shop  
Eugene, OR

Last Exit Goods  
Steamboat Springs, CO

Sawyer Paddles & Oars  
Gold Hill,

Sweetwater Travel Co.  
Livingston, MT

Redington Fly Fishing Gear  
Bainbridge Island, WA

Waterworks – Lamson  
Boise, ID

Fly Water Travel  
Bainbridge Island, WA

Tactical Fly Fisher  
Springville, UT

Four Corners River Sports  
Durango, CO

Fishwest  
Kamas, UT

Angler's Covey  
Colorado Springs, CO

The Reel Life  
Taos, NM

Aire Boats  
Meridian, ID

Moldy Chum  
Seattle, WA

Zach Lazzari LLC  
Missoula, MT

The Fly Shop  
Redding, CA

Colorado Tackle Pro  
Colorado Springs, CO

Adventure Education Consultants  
Anchorage, AK

Oshki  
Muskegon, MI

Trident Fly Fishing  
Portland, ME

CC:

The Honorable Thomas Carper, Chair, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito, Ranking Member, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Chair, House Committee Energy and Commerce

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Ranking Member, House Energy and Commerce Committee

The Honorable Bruce Westerman, Chair, House Natural Resources Committee

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Ranking Member, House Natural Resources Committee

The Honorable Sam Graves, Chair, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

The Honorable Rick Larsen, Ranking Member, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee