



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Sean Bothwell, California Coastkeeper Alliance, 949-291-3401, sbothwell@cacoastkeeper.org

CALIFORNIA COASTKEEPER ALLIANCE CALLS FOR ACTION AFTER SUPREME COURT DELIVERS BLOW TO CLEAN WATER ACT

May 25, 2023 (Sacramento, CA) – Today, the Supreme Court issued its [opinion](#) in the case of *Sackett v. EPA* and ruled in favor of the Sacketts and their corporate polluter allies, delivering a major setback to the essential protections afforded by the Clean Water Act (CWA). This decision significantly narrows the range of waters protected by the CWA and opens the door for thousands of damaging projects to move forward without federal water quality protections. Without these essential legal protections, wetlands, rivers, and lakes across the country – and the communities who depend on them – are now much more vulnerable to industry pollution, flooding, and destruction. In his concurrence, even Justice Kavanaugh noted that this decision will have “significant repercussions for water quality and flood control throughout the United States.”

Wetlands, rivers, streams, and lakes are inextricably connected with the rest of California’s waterways. A blow to one threatens water quality everywhere and leaves millions of people at risk of dangerously contaminated drinking water. With intensifying droughts wreaking havoc on agriculture, recreation, fisheries, and public water supplies, and toxins increasingly threatening water sources in California, now could not be a worse time to weaken this landmark environmental law.

This ruling opens the door for polluters in California to argue that the protections of the Clean Water Act no longer apply to discharges to wetlands and seasonal waterbodies throughout the State, and that State laws protecting these waters are not as strict as those required by the Clean Water Act. Undoubtedly polluters will be calling on State regulators to establish new, less-stringent state standards to fill the void, jeopardizing the health of all downstream waters and with it everyone in California.

In response, Sean Bothwell, Executive Director of California Coastkeeper Alliance, released the following statement:

“The U.S. Supreme Court has embraced the extreme demands of big polluters and has dramatically narrowed the scope of the Clean Water Act, undoing protections that have safeguarded our waters for over 50 years. In doing so, the Court has failed the most vulnerable among us – namely indigenous communities, communities of color, and those most vulnerable to pollution, who face intensifying climate disasters. Congress and the California Legislature need to act fast to protect our waterways so that all Californians have access to fishable, swimmable, and drinkable waters.”

###

ABOUT CALIFORNIA COASTKEEPER ALLIANCE - California Coastkeeper Alliance represents Waterkeepers programs statewide as they fight for drinkable, swimmable, fishable waters for all Californians. CCKA defends and expands California’s protective legislation and strengthens the function of our State Water Board. For more information, visit www.cacoastkeeper.org or @CA_Waterkeepers on social media.