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REPRESENTING SENATE DISTRICT 24

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Re-Establishing Clean Water Act Standards Needed To Protect Vulnerable Ecosystems and Access to Clean Water

SACRAMENTO – Senator Ben Allen introduced the Right to Clean Water Act, SB 601, today, to safeguard California’s water systems by enshrining into state law previous federal protections offered by the federal Clean Water Act.

“The challenges presented by ever-changing federal policy requires California to step up and fill the void that is left when priorities become misaligned,” said Senator Allen. “The federal Clean Water Act, punched by the Supreme Court less than two years ago, provided important protections for many waters throughout California. Now more than ever, we must take action to protect vulnerable ecosystems so they may thrive long into the future.”

The 2023 United States Supreme Court *Sackett v. EPA* decision stripped away federal [Clean Water Act](#) protections that regulated discharge pollution and quality standards for many of our streams and wetlands. These delicate water systems serve a vital role in providing clean water to our communities, foster highly productive ecosystems, and [provide natural carbon sequestration benefits](#) to aid in our climate change mitigation efforts.

SB 601 will re-establish previous federal protections for California wetlands, streams, and drinking water by establishing permitting requirements that defend against discharge pollutants from business operations or construction. Standards established by these permits will meet or exceed federal protections provided during the Biden administration.

“The persistent undermining of federal protections for clean water leaves California streams and wetlands vulnerable to pollution and mismanagement,” said Ashley Overhouse, water policy

advisor for Defenders of Wildlife. “Now is the time for California to ensure that clean, healthy waters remain available for future generations of wildlife and people alike.”

“We are not going backwards. California has enjoyed clean water protections for 50 years and we have a right to continue to do so,” said Sean Bothwell, Executive Director for California Coastkeeper Alliance. “The Right to Clean Water Act preserves California’s values in the face of turbulent federal disruptions, while efficiently moving the state’s clean water programs forward.”

SB 601 will be referred to its relevant policy committee in the coming weeks.



Ben Allen represents the 24th State Senate District, which consists of the Westside, Hollywood, coastal South Bay, and Santa Monica Mountains communities of Los Angeles County.