Trump Tells EPA to Dismantle Clean Water Rules

President Trump issued an order on Tuesday directing his administration to begin the long process of rolling back sweeping clean water rules that were enacted by Obama.

The order directs the EPA to set begin dismantling the Waters of the United States rule, which expanded the authority of regulators over the nation's waterways and wetlands. It's one of President Obama's signature environmental legacies.

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Farmers, ranchers, real estate developers and others, have complained about the rule, saying it invited heavy-handed bureaucrats to burden their businesses with too many restrictions and fines for minor violations.

> *It is such a horrible, horrible rule. It has such a nice name, but everything about it is bad."*

Obama's EPA stated that such claims were exaggerated and misrepresented in the media. TheWaters of the United States rule, championed by environmental groups, gives the EPA broad authority over nearly two-thirds of the waterways in the country. Trump called it "one of the worst examples of federal regulation" and "a massive power grab," as he signed the directive Tuesday.

The climate and the clean water rules from Obama's era were enacted after a tedious and lengthy process of public hearings, scientific analysis, and bureaucratic review. That entire process must be revisited before the rules can be weakened or dismantled. It is likely to take years.

> *These wetland protections help ensure that over 100 million Americans have access to clean and safe drinking water. Access to safe drinking water is a human right, and Trump's order is a direct violation of this right." – California billionaire climate activist Tom Steyer said in a statement*

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The executive orders come right after the administration's release of a budget that includes a lot less money for the EPA. Trump vowed to continue to eliminate or undermine any Obama-era environmental protections he can wherever he sees the opportunity.

> *So many jobs we have delayed for so many years. It is unfair to everybody." – Trump*

There are industries that disagree. Tuesday's order received swift rebuke from fishing and hunting groups, which claim that the clean water rule has benefited the economy by sustaining hundreds of thousands of jobs in their industry.

Sources:

- *Trump directs EPA to begin dismantling clean water rule* – LA Times
- *US Drinking Water At Risk From Trump's Cuts To Pollution Rules* – New Scientist