

U.S. Rep. Jo Ann Emerson (MO-08) said today that the Clean Water Act should not be redefined to give the federal government jurisdiction over more "navigable waters" of the United States.

"A change in this rule would significantly expand the reach of the federal government onto private property. Americans with small ponds, streams, even flooded ditches could find themselves subjected to a slew of rules, regulations, and requirements under the Clean Water Act," Emerson said.

The Clean Water Act grants authority to the federal government to regulate water pollution, and agencies such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Environmental Protection Agency implement the law where it applies.

"This debate goes far beyond what is reasonable to expect these agencies to regulate. It's important to send the message that members of Congress, especially those from districts where agriculture is a staple of the local economy, are not going to allow bureaucrats to stretch the definition of a common-sense term to include our small businesses, producers, and private property owners," Emerson said. "The administration should not have the authority to redefine the intent of Congress to suit its own desire to heap regulations at the feet of law-abiding citizens."

Emerson and several of her colleagues sent a letter to federal agencies which are issuing guidance to the Obama Administration on expanding the "navigable waters" definition.