Duckworth, Merkley, Booker Introduce Legislation Urging EPA to Reverse Trump's Weakening of Clean Water Act

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WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), the Ranking Member of the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works' Subcommittee on Fisheries, Water and Wildlife, Cory Booker (D-NJ), Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and five of their colleagues introduced a resolution today calling on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to maintain and strengthen *Clean Water Act* protections following the Trump Administration's relentless attacks on the landmark law. The resolution also recognizes the large impact that unhealthy waterways and lakes have for recreation revenue and public health, as well as the significant dangers posed to human health by the widespread proliferation of PFAS chemicals in our nation's waterways.

"No parent should fear that their child could get ill from a swim in the lake or that their entire family could get sick from the fish they brought home for Sunday dinner,"

Duckworth said. "Unfortunately, the Trump Administration's repeated attacks on the *Clean Water Act*—a law that has helped move us toward a future where all of our waters are clean enough to drink and enjoy recreationally—have made those fears very real for families in Illinois and across the country. I'll continue working with my colleagues to protect every American's right to clean, safe drinking water."

"Safe, clean water is among the most critical resources for the health of all of our communities, as well as the vitality of our rural and recreational economies," said Merkley, who is a member of the Environmental Justice Caucus. "Frustratingly, at a time when so many families are still without reliable and safe water access, the Trump administration is taking us backward. We need to strengthen, not gut, the bedrock *Clean Water Act*—by cracking down on the harmful pollution of our waterways and investing in the state-of-the-art water infrastructure families can rely on for years to come."

"Over the past three and a half years the Trump Administration has gutted the environmental protections that seek to guarantee every American's right to access clean air and water," said Booker. "These rollbacks threaten the health and safety of all of us, and especially the communities that are already disproportionately burdened by environmental toxins—communities of color, low-income communities and indigenous communities. At a time when our country is facing an unprecedented public health crisis, we are calling on the EPA to strengthen, not weaken, the *Clean Water Act,* and work to ensure that our all of our waters are safe, clean and healthy."

This past May, Duckworth secured several key environmental justice wins in the America's Wastewater Infrastructure Act of 2020 and the Drinking Water Infrastructure Act of 2020 to ensure that the benefits of water infrastructure improvements are felt equitably across the country. Duckworth also joined her colleagues in introducing a bill to help communities combat per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination and exposure in drinking water and groundwater in March of this year.In November of last year, Duckworth led a hearing about maintaining state's authorities to protect their waterways and wrote an op-ed on the importance of protecting the *Clean Water Act*.

U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Martin Heinrich (D-NV), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Ed Markey (D-MA) also helped Duckworth introduce this legislation. U.S. Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-MI-12) and Chris Pappas (D-NH-01) introduced the House companion to this resolution in January of this year. This legislation has been endorsed by Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Clean Water Action, Earthjustice, Environment America, Environmental Law & Policy Center, GreenLatinos, League of Conservation Voters, National Wildlife Federation, Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club and Southern Environmental Law Center. A copy of the resolution is available here.