

Clean Water Act/Promises Half Kept at Half Century Mark: Environmental Integrity Project Report



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The Environmental Integrity Project (“EIP”) issued on March 17th a report titled:

The Clean Water Act at 50: Promises Half Kept at the Half Century Mark (“Report”)

EIP describes itself as a:

... nonpartisan, nonprofit organization established in March of 2002 by former EPA enforcement attorneys to advocate for effective enforcement of environmental laws.

In referencing the fact that the Clean Water Act will mark its 50th anniversary this year, the *Report* undertakes a state-by-state and national review of impairment data for jurisdictional waterbodies.

By way of summary, EIP argues in the *Report* that the Clean Water Act has fallen short of its 1983 goal of all United States jurisdictional waters being fishable and swimmable by 1983. The national figures it cites include:

- 1,426,619 miles of rivers and streams have been assessed
- 725,856 miles are impaired
- 51% of assessed river and stream miles are classified as impaired

The term “impaired” means that the waterbody is not attaining one or more of the water quality standards that have been set to support a designated use.

Some of the obstacles argued to account for this data include:

- Absence of controls for nonpoint sources
- Failure of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) to undertake a periodic review under the Clean Water Act and update technology-based limits for point sources
- Budget cuts to EPA and state agencies
- Failure of government enforcement of permit requirements
- Ineffective Total Maximum Daily Load plans
- Weak management of water pollution issues in watersheds that cross boundaries of two or more states

The *Report* includes a number of detailed maps and charts providing various data.

Other components of the *Report* include:

- Strengths and Weaknesses of the Clean Water Act
- Barriers to Progress

- State Monitoring and Listing of Waterways
- Method and Analysis
- State Profiles
- Florida
- California
- Louisiana
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Delaware
- Conclusion and Recommendations

A copy of the *Report* can be downloaded [here](#).