

# Detroit Free Press

## Best left to states

The Free Press is right to suggest that Congress must step in to rectify U.S. Supreme Court cases that muddy the issue of wetlands regulations (“Time to fix the water act to protect nation’s wetlands,” Dec. 6). However, the worst scenario for Michigan property owners and anyone doing business in the state would be passage of the Clean Water Restoration Act.

Removing the word “navigable” from current law would give federal regulators from the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers license to control the use of virtually all private property that is wet -- even if the property contains water for only a few days a year. If Michigan farmers, beachfront property owners, small businesses and home owners weren’t harried enough by overzealous regulators, imagine these federal agencies sitting in a distant location serving as a national

zoning board, unelected and unaccountable to the community, and unaware of local conditions.

Congress should regulate only permanent wetlands that are adjacent to and inseparably bound up with navigable waters. The protection of isolated wetlands is best left to the individual states that have the most at stake in protecting their natural resources and are in a better position to balance wetland protection with private property rights and economic development.

It seems ironic that some of the very same people concerned about other states using Michigan water are anxious to give a distant federal bureaucracy more control over water-related resources.

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