



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

The Voice For Real Estate®

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June 20, 2006

The Honorable John Duncan
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
104 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Duncan:

On behalf of the 1.3 million members of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, the nation's largest professional trade association, I am writing to express strong support for H.R. 5558, the Stormwater Enforcement and Permitting Act of 2006 (SEPA). H.R. 5558 is a common sense approach to protecting water quality and the environment without unduly increasing the cost of housing.

In its current form, the stormwater program is replete with duplication and contradiction. Although 45 states have been authorized to operate the Clean Water Act's storm water permitting program, also known as the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program, EPA has nonetheless continued to pursue enforcement actions in these states. Paperwork requirements dominate the program and minor paperwork violations are responsible for the majority of the penalties EPA has assessed against permit holders.

The changes to the Clean Water Act proposed in SEPA would grant states currently authorized to run the stormwater program primary NPDES permit enforcement authority. Residential construction site operators who have been found in noncompliance would be granted a limited opportunity to correct the error before penalties are assessed. Administrative requirements would be lifted under certain circumstances, thus substantially reducing the paperwork burden on many small businesses.

While EPA could make changes to some aspects of the storm water permitting program, this legislation will provide sufficient clarity to regulators and the regulated community, while increasing housing affordability. NAR thanks you for introducing H.R. 5558.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Stevens, CRB, CRS, GRI
2006 President, National Association of REALTORS®