



*Natural building blocks for quality of life*

May 4, 2005

The Honorable Richard Baker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Baker:

On behalf of the National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (NSSGA), I am writing to thank you for your efforts to improve the nation's policies regarding wetlands, and to express our strong support for your legislation, the "Federal Wetlands Jurisdiction Act of 2005." Specifically, the legislation clarifies a Supreme Court ruling by drawing a sensible line between the Federal government and state jurisdiction, while maintaining current environmental protections.

NSSGA agrees with your legislation that Section 404 of the Clean Water Act should only cover those bodies of water or wetlands directly adjacent to, or having a direct surface connection to navigable waters. Importantly, your legislation simply clarifies whether the Federal government or states are responsible for managing and protecting bodies of water and wetlands.

There are too many incidents of landowners who acquire property with the expressed intent of developing their private land only to be told later that the dry ditch or ephemeral watercourse on their property is jurisdictional and development cannot proceed without lengthy permitting process that can stretch for years. To be caught in this jurisdictional purgatory, not knowing if you need a Section 404 permit or not, is a nightmare for landowners. Some of these delays originate precisely because there is no clear jurisdictional definition, something this legislation will address. This proposal will help swiftly resolve many disputes and speed up the permitting process, all the while protecting the environment. I consider this a win-win-win solution to an unnecessary problem.

The National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association's member companies produce 90 percent of the crushed stone, and 70 percent of the sand and gravel consumed annually in the United States. Aggregates are the largest component of both asphalt and concrete. More than three billion tons of aggregates were produced in the U.S. in 2004 at a value of approximately \$16 billion, contributing \$37.5 billion to the GDP of America. In 29 of the 50 states, crushed stone, sand and gravel are the principal nonfuel minerals produced, and in another 15 states, our product is the second most valuable nonfuel mineral produced. With over 10,000 sites nationwide and a workforce of 115,000 men and women, most Congressional Districts are home to multiple operations.

NSSGA and its members welcome your common sense and much needed proposal and will work with you to improve wetland policy for the benefit of this and future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Joy Wilson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jennifer Joy Wilson  
President & CEO

