

Tribe, environmentalists fight rollback of US water rule

[Click to copy](#)

By SUSAN MONTOKA BRYAN June 25, 2020

RELATED TOPICS

- [Environment](#)
- [Wetlands](#)
- [Native Americans](#)

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — The nation’s largest Native American tribe and several environmental groups are waging a legal challenge to a revised federal rule that lifts protections for many streams, creeks and wetlands across the U.S.

ADVERTISEMENT

The rule, which took effect Monday, narrows the types of waterways that qualify for federal protection under the half-century-old Clean Water Act. As a result, critics say the number of waterways across the Navajo Nation and other arid states in the West that were previously protected under the act have been drastically reduced.

ADVERTISEMENT

ADVERTISEMENT

Public health advocates, environmentalists and some Western states, among other opponents, had promised court fights once the rule was imposed, saying the rollback will leave many of the nation’s millions of miles of waterways more vulnerable to pollution.

“At this point in time, with climate change occurring around the world, it’s more prudent than ever to protect our land, water and air,” said Navajo President Jonathan Nez. “We, as Diné People, have a duty to preserve and conserve our natural resources to ensure that our future generations have access to clean water, air and land.”