

1 Bradley A. Benbrook (SBN 177786)
Benbrook Law Group
2 400 Capitol Mall, Ste 2530
Sacramento, CA 95814
3 Tel: (916) 447-4900
Fax: (916) 447-4904
4 Email: brad@benbrooklawgroup.com
Counsel for State Intervenors

5 PATRICK MORRISEY
West Virginia Attorney General
6 Lindsay S. See*
Solicitor General
7 Benjamin E. Fischer*
8 Thomas T. Lampman*
Assistant Solicitors General
9 West Virginia Office of the Attorney General
1900 Kanawha Blvd. East
10 Building 1, Room E-26
Tel: (304) 558-2021
11 Fax: (304) 558-0140
Email: lindsay.s.see@wvago.gov
12 *Counsel for Intervenor State of West Virginia*

CHRISTOPHER M. CARR
Attorney General of Georgia
Andrew A. Pinson
Solicitor General
Ross W. Bergethon
Deputy Solicitor General
Drew F. Waldbeser
Assistant Solicitor General
Office of the Georgia Attorney General
40 Capitol Square, S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
Tel: (404) 651-9453
Fax: (404) 656-2199
Email: apinson@law.ga.gov
Counsel for Intervenor State of Georgia
(Add'l Counsel Listed on Signature Page)

13 **IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**
14 **FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

15 State of California, *et al.*,
16 *Plaintiffs,*
v.
17 Andrew Wheeler, *et al.*,
18 *Defendants.*

Case No. 3:20-cv-3005-RS

**STATE INTERVENORS' NOTICE
OF MOTION AND MOTION TO
INTERVENE IN SUPPORT OF
DEFENDANTS**

Hr'g Date: July 9, 2020
Hr'g Time: 1:30pm
Dep't: San Francisco Courthouse,
Courtroom 3, 17th Floor
Judge: Honorable Richard Seeborg
Action Filed: May 1, 2020

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NOTICE OF MOTION

Pursuant to Local Rule 7-1(b) and consistent with this Court's May 27, 2020 Order Regarding Motions to Intervene and Motions for Leave to Submit Amicus Briefs (Doc. 80), the States of Georgia, West Virginia, Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming ("State Intervenors") respectfully request leave to submit without oral argument this Motion to Intervene in Support of Defendants in the above-captioned case.

In the alternative, the State Intervenors notice that on July 9, 2020, at 1:30pm, or as soon as this matter may be heard before the Honorable Richard Seeborg in the above-titled Court, located at the San Francisco Courthouse, Courtroom 3, 17th Floor, 450 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, California, 94102, the State Intervenors will, and hereby do, move for the same relief.

The State Intervenors hereby move for leave to intervene as a matter of right under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 24(a)(2) or, in the alternative, permissively under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 24(b).

The State Intervenors submit in support this notice of motion and accompanying motion to intervene in support of defendants; proposed opposition to plaintiffs' motion for preliminary injunction; and proposed answer. The State Intervenors consulted with counsel for the plaintiffs and the defendants; the defendants take no position and the plaintiffs reserve the right to oppose.

MOTION AND MEMORANDUM TO INTERVENE IN SUPPORT OF DEFENDANTS

Pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 24(a)(2), the State Intervenors respectfully move to intervene in support of Defendants in this action concerning "The Navigable Waters Protection Rule: Definition of 'Waters of the United States,'" 85 Fed. Reg. 22,250 (Apr. 21, 2020) (to be codified at 33 C.F.R. pt. 328). In the alternative, the State Intervenors move for leave to intervene pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 24(c).

BACKGROUND

A. Statutory Background

The statutory term “waters of the United States” limits the geographic reach of federal regulatory jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act. Most notably, the Act’s key permitting programs for discharges of pollutants, 33 U.S.C. § 1342 (section 402), and “dredged or fill material,” *id.* § 1344 (section 404), require permits for discharges into “navigable waters,” which the Act defines as “the waters of the United States, including the territorial seas,” *Id.* § 1362(7). And the Act requires states to develop water quality standards—which designate the use for which a given body of water is to be protected, and then set criteria that must be met to safely allow that use—for “waters of the United States” within their borders. *See id.* § 1313. For farmers, developers, homeowners, and landowners, whether their land includes a feature covered under the Act determines whether they must first obtain a federal permit—a process that can take years and often costs tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars—to develop or use their property. *See Rapanos v. United States*, 547 U.S. 715, 722 (2006) (plurality op.) (citing 33 U.S.C. §§ 1362(12), 1362(6)). And unauthorized discharges can subject an individual to fines and other civil or criminal penalties. 33 U.S.C. §§ 1311(a), (f), 1319, 1365.

Recent Supreme Court decisions addressing the agencies’ attempts to define the “waters of the United States” subject to federal jurisdiction have rebuffed them as too expansive. *See Solid Waste Agency of N. Cook County v. U.S. Army Corps of Eng’rs (SWANCC)*, 531 U.S. 159, 174 (2001) (rejecting assertion of federal jurisdiction over isolated ponds based on mere ecological connection to jurisdictional waters); *Rapanos*, 547 U.S. at 739, 742 (plurality op.) (rejecting assertion of jurisdictions beyond “relatively permanent, standing or continuously flowing bodies of water” and “wetlands with a continuous surface connection to” those waters); *id.* at 776 (Kennedy, J., concurring) (rejecting assertion of jurisdiction over all “wetlands (however remote) possessing a surface-water connection with a continuously flowing stream (however small)”).

B. The 2015 Rule.

In June 2015, the agencies issued a final rule defining “waters of the United States.” 80 Fed. Reg. at 37,054 (June 29, 2015) (2015 Rule). Many of the State Intervenors, among others,

1 challenged that rule as contrary to the CWA, the Administrative Procedure Act, and the
2 Constitution. Reflecting the strength of these challenges, the rule was enjoined—and in some
3 cases, declared unlawful—by multiple federal courts. *See, e.g., Georgia v. Wheeler*, 418 F. Supp.
4 3d 1336, 1383 (S.D. Ga. 2019); *North Dakota, et al. v. EPA, et al.*, 127 F. Supp. 3d 1047 (D.
5 N.D. 2015); Order, *Texas v. EPA*, Case No. 3:15-cv-162 (S.D. Tex. Sept. 12, 2018) (Doc. 140).

6 While this litigation was ongoing, the President issued an Executive Order in early 2017
7 directing the agencies to review the prior rule. Exec. Order No. 13778, 82 Fed. Reg. 12,497 (Feb.
8 28, 2017). The federal agencies ultimately approached this goal in two steps: (1) rescinding the
9 old rule and re-codifying the pre-existing rules, then (2) issuing a new rule defining “waters of
10 the United States” consistent with the CWA and its underlying cooperative federalism
11 framework. *See, e.g., Definition of “Waters of the United States”—Recodification of Pre-*
12 *Existing Rules*, 82 Fed. Reg. 34,899 (July 17, 2017). Many of the State Intervenors submitted
13 comments in support of these proposed actions. *See, e.g., State of West Virginia et al., Comments*
14 *On The Proposed Rule Entitled Revised Definition of “Waters of the United States,”* 84 Fed.
15 *Reg.* 4154 (Feb. 14, 2019) (joined by West Virginia, Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho,
16 Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina,
17 Tennessee, Texas, and Utah).

18 **C. The 2020 Rule**

19 In October 2019, the Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers (“the
20 agencies”) published a final rule repealing the 2015 Clean Water Rule. *Definition of “Waters of*
21 *the United States”—Recodification of Pre-existing Rules*, 84 Fed. Reg. 56,626 (Oct. 22, 2019).
22 The agencies then published a second rule formally clarifying the definition of “waters of the
23 United States” under the Clean Water Act. *See The Navigable Waters Protection Rule: Definition*
24 *of “Waters of the United States,”* 85 Fed. Reg. 22,250 (Apr. 21, 2020) (to be codified at 33
25 C.F.R. 328) (“2020 Rule”). In the 2020 Rule, the agencies concluded that the 2015 rule did not
26 reflect the CWA’s proper legal limits and adopted, instead, an approach that largely tracks Justice
27 Scalia’s plurality opinion in *Rapanos. Id.* at 22,265. The agencies also recognized that it was
28

1 inappropriate to push the statute’s jurisdictional limits without a clear statement from Congress
2 authorizing the encroachment into traditional state prerogatives. *Id.* at 22,260, 22,272.

3 On May 1, 2020, the plaintiffs filed this action challenging the 2020 Rule, seeking
4 declaratory and injunctive relief. Doc. 1. The plaintiffs argued that the agencies acted arbitrarily
5 and capriciously in repealing the 2015 rule and asked this Court to vacate and set aside the 2020
6 Rule. *Id.* at 21, 22. On May 18, 2020, the plaintiffs moved for a nationwide preliminary
7 injunction. Doc. 30.

8 INTERESTS AND GROUNDS FOR INTERVENTION

9 Intervention should be permitted as of right because the State Intervenors “claim[] an
10 interest relating to the property or transaction that is the subject of the action, and [are] so
11 situated that disposing of the action may as a practical matter impair or impede the [State
12 Intervenors’] ability to protect [their] interest,” and “existing parties [do not] adequately
13 represent that interest.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 24(a)(2). The Ninth Circuit has interpreted this standard as
14 requiring State Intervenors to show that: (1) “the application is timely”; (2) they have “a
15 significant protectable interest relating to the . . . subject of the action”; (3) the action may
16 “impede or impair” their ability to protect their interests; and (4) existing parties “may not
17 adequately represent . . . [their] interests.” *Day v. Apoliona*, 505 F.3d 963, 965 (9th Cir. 2007).
18 The State Intervenors easily fulfill all four of these factors.

19 A. The application is timely.

20 The Rules of Civil Procedure do not set a deadline for intervention, but plaintiffs filed their
21 complaint on May 1, 2020, and the State Intervenors are filing this motion just 31 days after that
22 date and before any the federal defendants have filed any answer or responsive pleading. Perhaps
23 more relevant, this motion is being filed just 14 days after plaintiffs filed a motion for a
24 preliminary injunction seeking nationwide relief—a remedy that would have significant
25 consequences for all States. Intervention at this early stage also would not delay this action as the
26 State Intervenors are simultaneously filing an answer and proposed response to plaintiffs’ motion
27 for preliminary injunction.
28

1 **B. The State Intervenor**s have a significant protectable interest in ensuring the
2 **proper interpretation of the federal government’s jurisdiction over their**
3 **sovereign lands and waters.**

4 The State Intervenor

s have clear and substantial protectable interests at stake in this action.
5 The “property” that is the subject of this action, particularly given the plaintiffs’ request for
6 nationwide relief, includes the sovereign lands and waters within the State Intervenors’ borders
7 that is potentially subject to federal jurisdiction under the CWA. *Day*, 505 F.3d at 965. Further,
8 the “regulation of land use” that is the consequence of deeming waters “waters of the United
9 States” is a “quintessential state and local power.” *Rapanos*, 547 U.S. at 738 (plurality op.); *see*
10 *also* 33 U.S.C. § 1251(b). It follows that regulating and protecting intrastate waters is an
11 important element of state sovereignty. *Tarrant Reg’l Water Dist. v. Hermann*, 569 U.S. 614, 632
12 (2013) (citing *United States v. Alaska*, 521 U.S. 1, 5 (1997)). These interests are at the heart of
13 this action, which seeks to expand the scope of federal regulatory jurisdiction over the States’
14 lands and waters.

15 Moreover, the scope of the term “waters of the United States” does not just set federal
16 jurisdiction over waters within the States: it sets the scope of the States’ responsibilities under the
17 CWA. That Act was built on a cooperative federalism framework. Congress enacted the CWA
18 with a policy to “recognize, preserve, and protect the primary responsibilities and rights of states
19 to prevent, reduce, and eliminate pollution” and to “plan the development and use ... of land and
20 water resources.” 33 U.S.C. § 1251(b). And as contemplated by the Act, the large majority of
21 states have assumed authority to administer the CWA’s core permitting regime, *see* U.S. Evtl.
22 Protection Agency, *NPDES Program Authorizations* (July 2019), *available at*
23 [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-04/documents/npdes_authorized_states_2020_map.pdf)
24 04/documents/npdes_authorized_states_2020_map.pdf. The States are also required to issue
25 water-quality certifications for every federal permit issued within their borders. *See* 33 U.S.C. §
26 1341(a). The scope of those programs depends on what counts as “waters of the United States,”
27 and the scope of that term thus determines what regulatory duties and costs the States must
28 absorb.

1 These substantial effects of the definition of “waters of the United States” on the State
2 Intervenor’s interests drove their efforts to challenge the 2015 Rule, which attempted to render
3 the “vast majority of the nation’s water features” subject to federal jurisdiction. U.S. EPA &
4 Department of the Army, *Economic Analysis of the EPA-Army Clean Water* at 11 (May 20, 2015)
5 (Docket ID: EPA-HQ-OW-2011-0880-20866), [https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=EPA-](https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=EPA-HQ-OW-2011-0880-20866)
6 [HQ-OW-2011-0880-20866](https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=EPA-HQ-OW-2011-0880-20866). This kind of encroachment on the States’ sovereign power to
7 regulate their water resources lacked statutory or even constitutional justification. *See, e.g.*,
8 *Hodel v. Va. Surface Mining & Reclamation Ass’n Inc.*, 452 U.S. 264, 286-87 (1981) (explaining
9 that a federal rule violates States’ Tenth Amendment powers when it addresses matters that are
10 indisputably attributes of state sovereignty, and when compliance with the rule would directly
11 impair States’ ability to structure integral operations); *see also, e.g., Kansas v. United States*, 249
12 F.3d 1213, 1227 (10th Cir. 2001). The 2020 Rule, by contrast, better respects the States’
13 traditional regulatory authority over their lands and waters by returning federal regulators to their
14 appropriate lane. The State Intervenor’s thus have substantial interests that are threatened by the
15 plaintiffs’ action, which seeks to re-impose expansive federal jurisdiction in this area of
16 traditional state authority. If the plaintiffs have interests in this action, the State Intervenor’s
17 undoubtedly have a protectable interest, too.

18 **C. The disposition of this action could impede the State Intervenor’s ability to**
19 **protect their interests.**

20 The risk this action poses to the State Intervenor’s interests is readily apparent. Many of the
21 State Intervenor’s challenged the 2015 Rule because its expansive assertion of jurisdiction
22 threatened to saddle them and their citizens with substantial costs and infringed their traditional
23 sovereign authority over their lands and waters. *See Order, North Dakota v. U.S. Env’tl. Prot.*
24 *Agency*, Case No. 3:15-cv-59 (N.D. Aug. 27, 2015 (ECF No. 70) (enjoining 2015 Rule in Alaska,
25 Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North
26 Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming); *Order, Georgia v. McCarthy*, Case No. 2:15-cv-79 (S.D.
27 Ga. June 8, 2018) (ECF No. 174) (enjoining the 2015 Rule in Alabama, Florida, Georgia,
28 Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Utah, West Virginia, and

1 Wisconsin); Order, *Texas v. EPA*, Case No. 3:15-cv-162 (S.D. Tex. Sept. 12, 2018) (ECF No.
2 140) (enjoining the 2015 Rule in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas). And many of the State
3 Intervenor also supported and continue to support the agencies’ promulgation of the 2020 Rule
4 as a necessary and important clarification of federal jurisdiction over their sovereign lands and
5 waters. *See* 84 Fed. Reg. 4154; Macy Decl. ¶ 8; Parfitt Decl. ¶ 3; Singletary Decl. ¶ 4; Swonke
6 Decl. ¶¶ 7–8. Now, the plaintiffs challenge the 2020 Rule as “arbitrary, capricious, and not in
7 accordance with law” and seek to have it set aside and vacated. Doc. 1, at 24. Further, and most
8 pressing, the plaintiffs seek universal injunctive relief in their motion for a preliminary
9 injunction. If the plaintiffs secure their requested relief, the consequences will extend to the State
10 Intervenor, too, even though they support implementation of the 2020 Rule and strongly oppose
11 the plaintiffs’ requested “relief.” *See, e.g., Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of Okla. v. Oklahoma*, 874 F.2d
12 709, 716 (10th Cir. 1989) (explaining that the “prospect of significant interference with ... self-
13 government” weighs against injunctive relief); *Wyandotte Nation v. Sebelius*, 443 F.3d 1247,
14 1255 (10th Cir. 2006); *Kansas v. United States*, 249 F.3d 1213, 1227 (10th Cir. 2001). And aside
15 from intervening in this case to defend against that challenge, there is no other ready recourse for
16 the State Intervenor to combat an injunction issued by this Court that applies within their
17 geographic boundaries.

18 **D. The existing parties will not adequately represent the interests of the State**
19 **Intervenor.**

20 Unlike the plaintiffs, the State Intervenor believe the 2020 Rule strikes a reasonable
21 balance between the roles of federal regulators and the States in protecting land and water
22 resources. The State Intervenor view the 2020 Rule as a substantial improvement over the prior
23 rule. The new rule builds on Justice Scalia’s plurality opinion in *Rapanos*, 85 Fed. Reg. at 22314,
24 which the State Intervenor will argue best comports with the text and purposes of the CWA—
25 and at a minimum avoids serious constitutional concerns. *Rapanos*, 547 U.S. at 737-38 (plurality
26 op.). The 2020 Rule’s approach also preserves the longstanding role of the States as primary
27 regulators of intrastate lands and waters by allowing for federal jurisdiction over only relatively
28 permanent bodies of water, and leaving within state control those areas that benefit the most

1 from regulation according to “local policies ‘more sensitive to the diverse needs of a
2 heterogeneous society.’” *Bond v. United States*, 564 U.S. 211, 221 (2011). The Court should hear
3 from States on both sides of the issue before ruling on this important question.

4 The defendants—officials and agencies of the federal government—will not adequately
5 represent the State Intervenors’ interests, either. Although the defendants will also urge the Court
6 to reject the Complaint, their rationale could differ substantively from the bases the State
7 Intervenors intend to advance. The State Intervenors’ interests could also differ from those of the
8 agencies when it comes to proper interpretation of the CWA’s cooperative federalism
9 framework, for example. The defendants also cannot respond to the plaintiffs’ arguments in the
10 same manner that the State Intervenors can: as same-level sovereigns in our federal form of
11 government. Further, the State Intervenors will be able to explain their own regulatory programs
12 better than other litigants. And if the Court holds that the 2020 Rule is unlawful, the plaintiffs
13 may seek a remedy that would increase the federal defendants’ power and impose irreparable
14 economic harms on the State Intervenors. Given this dynamic, the State Intervenors’ interests are
15 not adequately represented by any of the existing parties.

16 **E. In the alternative, the Court should permit intervention under Rule 24(b).**

17 Finally, in the event this Court does not grant intervention as a matter of right, the Court
18 should permit the State Intervenors to intervene in this matter pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil
19 Procedure 24(b)(1)(B), which provides: “On timely motion, the court may permit anyone to
20 intervene who ... has a claim or defense with the main action a common question of law or fact.”
21 The State Intervenors’ motion is timely and will not delay these proceedings, as explained above.
22 Moreover, their position in support of the 2020 Rule plainly involves common questions of law
23 and fact with this action. Their direct opposition to plaintiffs’ claims satisfies the “common
24 question” requirement for permissive intervention. *Kootenai Tribe of Idaho v. Veneman*, 313 F.3d
25 1094, 1110 (9th Cir. 2002). The State Intervenors therefore satisfy the requirements for
26 permissive intervention to protect their important interests in this case.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons stated above, the State Intervenors request that the Court grant their motion to intervene as of right, or, in the alternative, grant leave for State Intervenors to intervene.

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1 Respectfully submitted.

2 /s/ Bradley A. Benbrook
3 Bradley A. Benbrook (SBN 177786)
4 Benbrook Law Group
5 400 Capitol Mall, Ste 2530
6 Sacramento, CA 95814
7 Tel: (916) 447-4900
8 Fax: (916) 447-4904
9 Email: brad@benbrooklawgroup.com
10 *Counsel for State Intervenors*

11 PATRICK MORRISEY
12 *West Virginia Attorney General*

13 /s/ Lindsay S. See
14 Lindsay S. See*
15 *Solicitor General*
16 Benjamin E. Fischer*
17 Thomas T. Lampman*
18 *Assistant Solicitors General*
19 West Virginia Office of the Attorney General
20 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East
21 Building 1, Room E-26
22 Tel: (304) 558-2021
23 Fax: (304) 558-0140
24 Email: lindsay.s.see@wvago.gov
25 *Counsel for Intervenor State of West Virginia*

26 KEVIN G. CLARKSON
27 *Attorney General of Alaska*

28 /s/ Jennifer Currie
Jennifer Currie
Senior Assistant Attorney General
Alaska Department of Law
1031 West 4th Avenue, Suite 200
Anchorage, AK 99501-1994
Tel: (907) 269-5100
Fax: (907) 276-3697
Email: Jennifer.currie@alaska.gov
Counsel for Intervenor State of Alaska

CHRISTOPHER M. CARR
Attorney General of Georgia

/s/ Andrew A. Pinson
Andrew A. Pinson
Solicitor General
Ross W. Bergethon*
Deputy Solicitor General
Drew F. Waldbeser*
Assistant Solicitor General
Office of the Attorney General
40 Capitol Square, S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
Tel: (404) 651-9453
Fax: (404) 656-2199
Email: apinson@law.ga.gov
Counsel for Intervenor State of Georgia

STEVE MARSHALL
Attorney General of Alabama

/s/ A. Barrett Bowdre
A. Barrett Bowdre
Deputy Solicitor General
Office of the Attorney General
501 Washington Ave.
P.O. Box 300152
Montgomery, AL 36130
Telephone: (334) 353-8892
Fax: (334) 353-8400
E-mail: barrett.bowdre@AlabamaAG.gov
Counsel for Intervenor State of Alabama

LESLIE RUTLEDGE
Attorney General of Arkansas

/s/ Dylan L. Jacobs
Dylan L. Jacobs*
Assistant Solicitor General
Office of the Attorney General
323 Center St., Suite 200
Little Rock, AR 72201
Tel: (501) 682-3661
Fax: (501) 682-2591
Email: Dylan.Jacobs@ArkansasAG.gov
Counsel for Intervenor State of Arkansas

1 LAWRENCE WASDEN
Attorney General of Idaho

2 /s/ Mark Cecchini-Beaver (with permission)
3 Mark Cecchini-Beaver
4 Deputy Attorney General
5 Office of the Attorney General
6 Environmental Quality Section
7 1410 N. Hilton, 2nd Floor
8 Boise, ID 83706
9 Tel: (208) 373-0494
10 Fax: (208) 373-0481
11 Email: Mark.Cecchini-Beaver@deq.idaho.gov
12 Counsel for Intervenor State of Idaho

8 DEREK SCHMIDT
Attorney General of Kansas

9 /s/ Jeffrey A. Chanay
10 Jeffrey A. Chanay*
11 Chief Deputy Attorney General
12 Office of the Attorney General
13 120 SW 10th Ave., 3rd Floor
14 Topeka, Kansas 66612
15 Tel: (785) 368-8435
16 Email: jeff.chanay@ag.ks.gov
17 Counsel for Intervenor State of Kansas

15 JEFF LANDRY
Attorney General of Louisiana

16 /s/ Elizabeth B. Murrill
17 Elizabeth B. Murrill*
18 Solicitor General
19 Joseph Scott St. John*
20 Deputy Attorney General
21 Louisiana Department of Justice
22 1885 N. 3rd St.
23 Baton Rouge, LA 70802
24 Tel: (225) 456-7544
25 Email: MurrillE@ag.louisiana.gov
26 Counsel for Intervenor State of Louisiana

/s/ Thomas M. Fisher
Thomas M. Fisher
Solicitor General of Indiana
Office of the Indiana Attorney General
302 W. Washington Street, IGCS, 5th Floor
Indianapolis, Indiana
Tel: (317) 233-8292
Fax: (317) 233-8292
Email: tom.fisher@atg.in.gov
Counsel for Intervenor State of Indiana

DANIEL CAMERON
Attorney General of Kentucky

/s/ Carmine Iaccarino
Carmine Iaccarino*
Executive Director, Office of Civil &
Environmental Law
Office of the Attorney General
700 Capitol Avenue
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
Tel: (502) 696-5650
Email: Carmine.Iaccarino@ky.gov
Counsel for Intervenor Commonwealth of
Kentucky

LYNN FITCH
Attorney General of Mississippi

/s/ Kristi H. Johnson
Kristi H. Johnson
Solicitor General
Office of the Attorney General
P.O. Box 220
Jackson, Mississippi 39205
Tel: (601) 359-5563
Email: Kristi.Johnson@ago.ms.gov
Counsel for Intervenor State of Mississippi

TIMOTHY C. FOX
Attorney General of Montana

/s/ Melissa Schlichting
Melissa Schlichting
Deputy Attorney General
Office of the Attorney General
215 North Sanders / P.O. Box 201401
Helena, MT 59620-1401
Tel: (406) 444-3602
Email: MSchlichting@mt.gov
Counsel for Intervenor State of Montana

1 ERIC S. SCHMITT
Attorney General of Missouri
2 /s/ Julie Marie Blake
Julie Marie Blake*
3 *Deputy Solicitor General*
Office of the Attorney General
4 P.O. Box 899
Jefferson City, MO 65102
5 Tel: (573) 751-3321
Fax: (573) 751-0774
6 Email: Julie.Blake@ago.mo.gov
Counsel for Intervenor State of Missouri

7 DOUGLAS J. PETERSON
Attorney General
8 /s/ James A. Campbell
James A. Campbell*
9 *Solicitor General*
Justin D. Lavene*
10 *Assistant Attorney General*
Office of the Nebraska Attorney General
11 2115 State Capitol
Lincoln, NE 68509
12 Email: justin.lavene@nebraska.gov
Email: jim.campbell@nebraska.gov
13 Tel: (402) 471-2682
Counsel for Intervenor State of Nebraska

15 DAVE YOST
Attorney General of Ohio
16 /s/ Benjamin M. Flowers
Benjamin M. Flowers
17 *Solicitor General*
Office of Ohio Attorney General
18 30 E. Broad St., 17th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215
19 Tel: (614) 728-7511
20 Email: bflowers@ohioattorneygeneral.gov
Counsel for Intervenor State of Ohio

22 ALAN WILSON
Attorney General
23 /s/ James Emory Smith, Jr.
James Emory Smith, Jr.*
24 *Deputy Solicitor General*
Office of the Attorney General
25 1000 Assembly Street, Room 519
Columbia, South Carolina 29201
26 Tel: (803) 734-3680
Email: esmith@scag.gov
27 *Counsel for Intervenor State of South Carolina*

WAYNE STENEHJEM
Attorney General of North Dakota
2 /s/ Margaret I. Olson
Margaret I. Olson*
3 *Assistant Attorney General*
North Dakota Office of Attorney General
4 500 N. 9th Street
Bismarck, ND 58501
5 Tel: (701) 328-3640
Fax: (701) 328-4300
6 Email: maiolson@nd.gov
Counsel for Intervenor State of North Dakota

MIKE HUNTER
Attorney General of Oklahoma
9 /s/ Mithun Mansinghani
Mithun Mansinghani
10 *Solicitor General*
Oklahoma Office of the Attorney General
11 313 NE 21st Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
12 Phone: (405) 522-4392
Fax: (405) 521-4518
13 Email: Mithun.Mansinghani@oag.ok.gov
Counsel for Intervenor State of Oklahoma

JASON R. RAVNSBORG
Attorney General
16 /s/ Ann F. Mines Bailey
Ann F. Mines Bailey*
17 *Assistant Attorney General*
State of South Dakota
18 1302 E. Highway 14, Suite 1
Pierre, SD 57501-8501
19 Tel: (605) 773-3215
Fax: (605)773-4106
20 Email: ann.mines@state.sd.us
Counsel for Intervenor State of South Dakota

KEN PAXTON
Attorney General of Texas
23 /s/ Kyle D. Hawkins
Kyle D. Hawkins
24 *Solicitor General*
Office of the Attorney General
25 P.O. Box 12548
Austin, TX 78711-2548
26 Tel: (512) 936-1700
Fax: (512) 474-2697
27 Email: Kyle.Hawkins@oag.texas.gov
Counsel for Intervenor State of Texas

1 HERBERT H. SLATERY III
Attorney General and Reporter of Tennessee
2 /s/ Elizabeth P. McCarter
Elizabeth P. McCarter
3 *Senior Assistant Attorney General*
Office of the Attorney General
4 P.O. Box 20207
Nashville, TN 37202
5 Tel: (515) 532-2582
Email: lisa.mccarter@ag.tn.gov
6 *Counsel for Intervenor State of Tennessee*

BRIDGET HILL
Attorney General of Wyoming
/s/ James C. Kaste
James C. Kaste
Deputy Attorney General
Office of the Attorney General
2320 Capitol Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82002
Tel: (307) 777-6946
Fax: (307) 777-3542
Email: james.kaste@wyo.gov
Counsel for Intervenor State of Wyoming

7 SEAN D. REYES
Attorney General of Utah
8 /s/ Daniel Burton
Daniel Burton*
Chief Policy Counsel
9 Office of the Attorney General
Utah State Capitol Complex
10 350 North State Street, Suite 230
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-2320
11 Tel: (801) 538-9600
Email: danburton@agutah.gov
12 *Counsel for Intervenor State of Utah*
13

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on June 1, 2020, I served this motion to intervene in support of defendants by filing it with this Court’s ECF system.

/s/ Andrew A. Pinson
Andrew A. Pinson

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