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Rulings from U.S. Supreme Court a “disaster” for the environment

Decisions reveal the court is seeking to dismantle health and safety protections

A pair of rulings this week from the U.S. Supreme Court take aim at the foundation of environmental protection in this country. In a sweeping ruling today, the Court overturned *Chevron v. The Natural Resources Defense Council*, a 40 year-old decision that confirmed agency experts are in a better position than unelected federal judges to decide how to implement laws like the Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act. And in an unusual move yesterday, the Court voted to block the EPA’s Good Neighbor Rule while a challenge to the rule is pending in a lower court. The rule reduces interstate smog pollution in places like Wisconsin.

Clean Wisconsin Legal Counsel Katie Nekola had this to say about the actions from the Supreme Court:

“Piece by piece, the U.S. Supreme Court is dismantling environmental regulation, taking apart the foundation of what has allowed us to clean up the air and water since the 1970s. This is a disaster for the environment. Today’s decision means that agencies can’t apply their expertise and experience to important laws like the Clean Water Act unless a federal judge agrees with the agency. It’s impossible for these laws to work as Congress intended without the ability of scientists, doctors, economists and researchers at administrative agencies like the EPA, FDA and DNR to interpret and implement statutes. This ruling puts enormous power in the hands of unelected judges who lack deep knowledge of the highly technical issues these agencies deal with every day, putting at risk countless safeguards for our health and safety that have been in place for so long. It will impact the safety of our food, medicine, children’s toys, consumer and fraud protections, air, water, you name it. Both of these recent decisions point to a Court that is actively working to unravel longstanding protections and policies across the board, and the harm will be far reaching.”

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On behalf of its more than 30,000 members, supporters and its coalition partners, Clean Wisconsin works to combat climate change and pollution of our air, water and land to ensure a healthy future for every Wisconsin community.

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