

Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture
KENT A. LEONHARDT



304-558-3550

agriculture.wv.gov



Facebook: West Virginia Department of Agriculture



Twitter: @WVDeptofAg

NEWS RELEASE
May 10, 2017

Contact: Crescent Gallagher
Communications Director
304/558-3708; 304/380-3922 (cell)
cgallagher@wvda.us

White House Asking for Feedback on Waters of the U.S. Rules

Charleston, WV - The White House announced they sent letters to all 50 governors and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) for comment on the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rules. States have until June 19th to provide feedback to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

"We have seen dangerous overreach from our federal government under the WOTUS rules that have negatively affected our farmers. Allowing the states to bring their concerns to the table is a great step to finding a solution that protects our farmers as well as our navigable water ways," stated Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. "I am glad the White House is soliciting state input."

President Donald Trump signed an executive order on February 28, 2017 to direct federal agencies to roll back and replace the Obama Administration's Clean Water Rule, also known as the "Waters of the U.S." or WOTUS, to ensure that the nation's navigable waters are kept free from pollution, while at the same time promoting economic growth, minimizing regulatory uncertainty and showing due regard for the roles of Congress and the states under the Constitution.

President Trump's executive order has two steps. The first is to revise the Code of Federal Regulations to re-define the definition of "Waters of the United States" which currently governs administration of the Clean Water Act, in light of a decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit staying a definition of "Waters of the United States" promulgated by the agencies in 2015.

The second step will be a public notice and comment rulemaking involving a substantive reevaluation and revision of the definition of "Waters of the U.S." in accordance with the executive order. The letters sent to governors seeking input is the second step of the process.

"Our department will be working diligently to provide feedback to the White House and NASDA during this process. I am looking forward to working with my fellow departments of agriculture to ensure we are promoting, not hindering, agriculture and safeguarding our waters in the United States," continued Commissioner Leonhardt. "We welcome any additional feedback from the public."

###