



ASA HUTCHINSON
GOVERNOR

ARKANSAS AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT

ARKANSAS FORESTRY COMMISSION
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1 NATURAL RESOURCES DRIVE, LITTLE ROCK, AR 72205 | (501) 225-1598 | AAD.ARKANSAS.GOV



WES WARD
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

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CONTACT: Adriane Barnes, (501) 516-6255, adriane.barnes@arkansas.gov

Arkansas Represented During WOTUS Discussions with EPA

STATEWIDE, ARK. – Arkansas was one of nine states to participate in a co-regulators meeting for Proposed Rulemaking of Waters of the United States (WOTUS) in Washington D.C. from March 8-9, 2018. The Arkansas Agriculture Department (AAD) and Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) represented Arkansas in the meetings. These discussions follow a state visit and listening session from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt last July, and a co-regulators meeting among Arkansas agricultural partners and other stakeholders on February 20 of this year.

“I am proud to see Arkansas involved with national rulemaking that could heavily impact us at the state and local level,” says Governor Hutchinson. “Our state leadership is ensuring that the needs and concerns of Arkansas landowners, farmers, ranchers, and other managers of our natural resources are being heard as this rule is reconsidered and redrafted.”

The meeting agenda included an opportunity to discuss policy development, the status of state authorities, state Clean Water Act language, and other water related programs. Agencies were asked to weigh-in on what waters should be considered as “Waters of the United States” as well as what waters and practices should be excluded from jurisdiction.

On February 28, 2017, President Trump issued an Executive Order directing the EPA and the Department of the Army to review and rescind or revise the 2015 WOTUS Rule. The agencies are in the process of reviewing the 2015 Rule and considering a revised definition of "Waters of the United States" consistent with the Executive Order. Learn more, [here](#).

“The Arkansas Agriculture Department helped to represent agriculture at the meeting and voiced concerns specific to our agricultural stakeholders,” says Arkansas Agriculture Secretary Wes Ward. “I am confident that our agricultural concerns have been heard and that agriculture will be a significant consideration in WOTUS discussions as this process continues.”

"This true engagement between the states and EPA is a significant example of how cooperative federalism can limit federal overreach and reduce cost burdens associated with an unclear rule. We are pleased to be a key voice on such a critical matter," says Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality Director Becky Keogh.

The Arkansas Agriculture Department is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture and forestry to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation. Visit www.aad.arkansas.gov.

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