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ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENT

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1406

March 09, 2020

The Honorable Andrew Wheeler
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20560

Dear Administrator Wheeler:

I write to express gratitude on behalf of Indiana's Sixth Congressional District for the Administration's rescission of the 2015 Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule under the Clean Water Act. Thanks to President Trump's leadership, farmers, foresters, and agricultural retailers nationwide can go back to work without worrying about government interference in their property rights. This revised policy will refocus the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on its core mission to responsibly protect the environment while balancing the needs of businesses and working families. I applaud your bold, smart choice in support of hardworking Hoosiers and all Americans.

Our state is no stranger to the EPA's recent history of aggressive federal land and water power plays. Indiana farmers across all 92 counties have felt the heavy-hand of the agency's WOTUS rule, which put just about every body of water – ponds, streams and ditches included – under government control. Under this rule, Hoosiers were deluged with calls for permits, surveys assessments, wait times, and fees. Misinterpretations or disagreements with the EPA could result in hefty fines.

A family in North Vernon, Indiana, planned to revitalize a wedding venue with the addition of a small lake. In good faith, the family hired a professional environmental engineer to reconstruct multiple layout options compliance with WOTUS for the lake. Each design was rejected by the EPA without explanation, resulting in a regulatory nightmare that almost cost this family everything they had built. "Disturbing" the neighboring land adjacent to the wedding venue cost this family \$130,000. This is just one unfortunate example of how the strangling WOTUS regulations have harmed farmers, ranchers, producers, and rural landowners in the Crossroads of America.

I applaud the newly revised definition for WOTUS which will jolt economic growth across the county and allow farmers to do what they do best: farm. Hoosiers appreciate your record of fighting against the EPA's job-killing mandates, unwarranted regulation, and overreach by the federal government. Thank you for ensuring the EPA's mission is focused on the responsible protection of Indiana's natural resources without jeopardizing our economy and hurting hardworking families like those in North Vernon, Indiana.

Sincerely,

Greg Pence
Member of Congress