



MISSOURI FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

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February 26, 2018

Comments Submitted by Missouri Farm Bureau Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2017-0010

I submit the following comments on behalf of Missouri Farm Bureau, the state's largest general farm organization.

In keeping with comments presented for the record on February 7th during EPA's online public hearing, we remain in support of lake numeric nutrient criteria proposed by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and approved by the Missouri Clean Water Commission in January. At this time, we also incorporate by reference comments submitted for the docket by Missouri Governor Eric Greitens, DNR, and the Missouri Clean Water Commission, respectively, as well as comments submitted jointly by a coalition representing the American Farm Bureau and several other national organizations.

The proposal put forth by DNR and approved by the Clean Water Commission is scientifically and legally sound. Despite the unfortunate fact that the process was ultimately brought to a close by "sue-and-settle" litigation, the final proposal reflects solid, thorough analysis involving extensive research, much of it unique to Missouri, as noted by DNR in response to public comments filed during the state's rulemaking proceeding:

Missouri used a robust dataset comprised of nutrient related measurements from over 200 reservoirs throughout the state to support the development of reservoir nutrient criteria. This dataset includes over 32,000 records of chlorophyll and nutrient data, making it one of the largest datasets used for criteria derivation. The data originated from various University of Missouri programs and special studies, but most notably from the Lakes of Missouri Volunteer Monitoring Program (LMVP) and the Statewide Lake Assessment Program (SLAP). Using sport fishery status as an indicator of aquatic life use protection is ecologically justified because sport fish are generally apex predators in reservoir systems. The Department's findings show that the health of sport fish populations can be interpreted as an indicator of overall ecosystem health and the presence of a wide variety of aquatic biota, which is consistent with 10 CSR 20-7.031(1)(C)1.A and 40 CFR 131.11(a).

By adding new regulatory checkpoints for meeting targeted nutrient levels, Missouri's proposal significantly increases water quality protection for Missouri lakes in an appropriate, effective and responsible manner. On this basis alone, Missouri's proposal warrants EPA's unequivocal support. But in addition, DNR proposes further development of state numeric nutrient criteria specific to other designated uses based on research findings anticipated in the near future:

Data continues to be gathered on algal toxins in Missouri lakes, with a second toxin (cylindrospermopsin) being monitored in addition to microcystin during the 2017 summer season. The Department is in discussions with the University of Missouri Limnology Laboratory to also add saxitoxin and anatoxin-a analyses to the lake monitoring programs. These additional data will help clarify the extent of algal toxins in Missouri's lakes. The Department also continues to grow its understanding of both the factors that drive toxin production and the efficiencies of treatment in removing algal toxins from source water. These efforts will enable the state to better address drinking water protection during a future rulemaking.

Research and information continue to develop at the national level with respect to nutrient impacts and criteria for the protection of recreational uses. Missouri intends to consider numeric nutrient criteria for recreational designated uses during a future rulemaking. This effort will allow studies currently underway by USEPA and others on the effects of cyanotoxins on recreational uses to mature, and for the state to conduct user perception surveys of algae by the recreating public. Although specific criteria for the protection of recreational uses are not specified, the inclusion of both causal and response threshold values provides additional water quality protections.

When EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt addressed community leaders during his visit to a Missouri power plant last year, his comments regarding the "Back to Basics" initiative were met with great enthusiasm. We believe endorsing Missouri's plan of action is not only consistent with principles advocated by President Donald Trump and Administrator Pruitt, but showcases the Administration's commitment to both increased environmental protection and greater state decisionmaking authority. Consequently, we strongly urge EPA to approve Missouri's lake numeric nutrient criteria proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Blake Hurst". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Blake Hurst
President