



Walter Wright, Jr.
wwright@mwlaw.com
(501) 688.8839

Nutrients/Clean Water Act: September 22nd U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Memorandum – "Renewed Call to Action"

Arkansas Environmental, Energy, and Water Law Blog

09/30/2016

Deputy Assistant Administrator Joel Beauvais of the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") sent a September 22nd memorandum to State Environmental Commissioners and State Water Directors titled :

Renewed Call to Action to Reduce Nutrient Pollution and Support for Incremental Actions to Protect Water Quality and Public Health

The memorandum is stated to highlight:

...the continued need for action to address this challenge, calls upon states and stakeholders to intensify their efforts in collaboration with EPA, and announces support for state planning or implementation of watershed-based, multi-stakeholder projects to reduce impacts to public health from nitrates in sources of drinking water and from nitrogen and phosphorus pollution contributing to harmful algal blooms.

"Nutrients" in the Clean Water Act context generally refers to nitrogen and phosphorus.

The focus of the EPA memorandum is the impact of nutrients on water quality. It references what is characterized as a "national call to action" and a "framework for collaboration to address the substantial and growing threat of nutrient pollution to America's water resources" that was issued five years ago by the agency's Office of Water.

Subsequent EPA partnerships with states and other federal agencies, along with stakeholders, are cited in regards to the reduction of nitrogen and phosphorus loadings. However, despite these activities, EPA states that "there continues to be pressing need for concerted action to reduce nutrient pollution nationwide."

The memorandum cites as examples of potential threats to public health incidents from states such as Ohio, Texas, Florida, Utah, and Iowa that have involved algal blooms or high levels of nitrate in drinking water.

The memorandum identifies tasks or goals such as:

- Keeping the Focus on Nutrient Reductions from All Sources
- Prioritizing Watersheds and Setting Load Reduction Goals
- Reducing Point Sources of Nutrient Pollution
- Reducing Nutrient Loads from Nonpoint Sources

- Continued Progress on Developing Nutrient Criteria
- Financial Assistance, Including for Incremental Actions Focused on Public Health Risks
- Transparency and Accountability

[A copy of the memorandum can be downloaded here.](#)