Gulf of America Hypoxia Task Force/Mississippi/Atchafalaya River Basin: Progress Report Issued

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The United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") issued a June 11th news release providing an update on the Gulf of America Hypoxia Task Force ("Task Force").

EPA is a co-chair of the Task Force and addressed in the news release what it describes as progress:

… meeting voluntary, interim goals to reduce excess nutrients that can enter the Mississippi/Atchafalaya River Basin ("River Basin") and flow into the Gulf of America, impacting water quality.

The 12 states in the River Basin watershed participating in the Task Force include:

- Arkansas
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Ohio
- Tennessee
- Wisconsin

Secretary Wes Ward of the Arkansas Department of Agriculture is a state agency member of the Task Force.

EPA notes that nutrient reduction goals (i.e., 2025 interim targets) are intended to reduce total nitrogen and total phosphorus loads from the Mississippi and Atchafalaya River Basin to the Gulf of America by 20 percent. These interim targets are stated to have been developed to measure progress toward the larger 2035 goal outlined in the Gulf Hypoxia Action Plan.

U. S. Geologic Survey ("USGS") 2025 data is stated to show that total nitrogen has decreased by 28 percent compared to the baseline. Nevertheless, it is also noted that the interim target for total phosphorus has not been achieved. USGS is stated to indicate that total phosphorus loads from the River Basin increased by 13 percent compared to the baseline.

A copy of the news release can be found here.