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Arkansas Agriculture Department Encourages Arkansans to Provide Input for WOTUS by August 28

LITTLE ROCK, AR – Earlier this year, in accordance with a Presidential Executive Order, the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of the Army announced their intention to review and revise the definition of “Waters of the United States”. On July 27, 2017 the agencies initiated the first step in a two-step process by proposing to rescind the definition of “Waters of the United States” in the Code of Federal Regulations to re-codify the definition of “Waters of the United States,” which currently governs administration of the Clean Water Act, pursuant to a decision issued by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit staying a definition of “Waters of the United States” promulgated by the agencies in 2015.

The deadline for submitting public comments is August 28, 2017. The AAD encourages Arkansas landowners to participate in this process. More information about the public comment process and WOTUS can be found by visiting: <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=EPA-HQ-OW-2017-0203-0001>. You may also send your comments regarding WOTUS to wes.ward@aad.ar.gov or cynthia.edwards@aad.ar.gov.

“While we are encouraged by the steps that the EPA and Administrator Pruitt have taken thus far in rescinding the 2015 WOTUS Rule, we cannot expect the Administrator to carry this responsibility alone. It is critical that the input from Arkansas farmers, ranchers, and landowners be provided in a way that is specific to the needs of our industry and our rural communities,” says Arkansas Agriculture Secretary Wes Ward.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt visited Arkansas on July 20, 2017 to discuss this process and gather input regarding “Waters of the United States” and other policies at a large gathering of agriculture and forestry leaders in Little Rock. Administrator Pruitt was joined at the gathering by Governor Asa Hutchinson, Attorney General Leslie Rutledge, Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality Director Becky Keogh, and Arkansas Agriculture Secretary Wes Ward.

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. Learn more at aad.arkansas.gov.

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The Arkansas Agriculture Department offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

