

**December 9, 2020**

**TO:** Joe Biden's Agency Review Teams for the US EPA and USDA  
**FROM:** Undersigned National and State Agricultural Organizations  
**SUBJECT:** Opportunities for Making Further Major Gains in Nutrient Loss Reductions Initiatives to Protect Water Quality

The agricultural organizations below strongly encourage the incoming Biden Administration to reaffirm the policies articulated by U.S. EPA under President in the "Nutrient Loss Reduction Framework" issued in 2011 and reaffirmed in 2016, and we are ready to work with our membership and state or local affiliates to make those efforts a success. We note that the nutrient loss reduction practices that farmers and ranchers would adopt in this context are largely identical to those called for in the major US climate policy initiatives being considered today involving agriculture, allowing for the mutually supportive implementation of such efforts to make them achieve greater success. As a result, we are prepared to work with the Biden Administration as it simultaneously pursues such a nutrient loss reduction initiative and new policies and efforts with farmers, ranchers and foresters to increase climate resiliency and sustainably reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The 2011 Nutrient Loss Reduction Framework (["Working in Partnership with States to Address Phosphorus and Nitrogen Pollution through Use of a Framework for State Nutrient Reductions"](#)) called upon state, municipal and private sector leadership to bring agriculture, municipalities, and other stakeholders together to devise and begin the implementation of strategies to reduce nutrient losses to protect water quality. Those policies were promoted by U.S. EPA and USDA jointly through the Gulf of Mexico Program and the record shows that this framework has led to a rapid and meaningful expansion of substantive work to reduce nutrient losses in several Mississippi River Basin states. We have documented the progress that has been made in more than a dozen of the Mississippi River Basin states, as has U.S. EPA's Gulf of Mexico program. We are prepared to brief you on these findings. During the last four years U.S. EPA and USDA have offered sustaining support to the states' efforts, and we believe now there is a substantial opportunity for these Federal agencies to assist states and stakeholders and meet the challenges they face to successfully implement their strategies.

We strongly encourage U.S. EPA and USDA to embrace and reaffirm the core tenets of the 2011 Nutrient Loss Reduction Framework, and then devise and implement a program of assistance to the states to take the implementation of their strategies to the next level. That work need not be limited to the Mississippi River Basin states, as the original 2011 policies were made and offered to all EPA Regions and all 50 states. We encourage the adoption of this approach in any state where nutrient losses are a concern for water quality. U.S. EPA and USDA's efforts in this regard should entail scientific, financial and technical support and assistance, while still leaving the greatest responsibility for on-the-ground progress with the states, agriculture, municipalities and other stakeholders. The key to the future success of the approach established under the 2011 Framework is that it made stakeholders within each state (state and local agencies, agricultural, forestry and municipal water quality communities, and other stakeholders), responsible for the design and implementation of the work, and the resulting progress made. We welcome the opportunity to meet and work with U.S. EPA and USDA officials and staff as they seek to develop the details of such an effort.

Sincerely,

American Farm Bureau Federation	Agricultural Retailers Association
Illinois Corn Growers Association	Illinois Farm Bureau
Indiana Pork Producers	Iowa Farm Bureau Federation
Minnesota Agricultural Water Resources Center	National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives	National Corn Growers Association
National Milk Producers Federation	National Pork Producers Council
The Fertilizer Institute	