



PRESS RELEASE

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**The National Association of Clean Water Agencies and National Milk Producers Federation
Sign Landmark MOU to Increase Collaboration on Watershed Improvement Projects**

WASHINGTON, DC – The National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) and the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) today to promote increased cooperation and communication between the two organizations in their efforts to make watershed-level water quality improvements. This MOU marks an important milestone in efforts to strengthen ties between urban and rural sectors on conservation activities to improve local water quality and the environment.

The goal of the agreement is to encourage clean water agencies and nearby dairy farms to work together to improve both water quality and environmental benefits produced on dairy farms. Potential projects include cooperation on building anaerobic digesters, which can use manure to generate electricity and reduce methane emissions, and increasing production of water quality benefits through the use of nutrient separation technologies and land management practices such as planting grass buffers near streams and using no-till planting in fields.

Increased collaboration among the clean water and dairy sectors offers a host of mutually-beneficial and cost-effective opportunities to improve the environment, and NACWA and NMPF are excited about this opportunity to work more closely together.

“42 years after the passage of the Clean Water Act, we have reached a point where we must look upstream in our watersheds to realize further water quality improvements. This MOU will help to align the clean water and dairy communities around common and cost-effective approaches to meet the future water quality and energy needs of this country while sustaining two critical industries,” said Ken Kirk, Executive Director of NACWA.

“It’s more cost effective to produce water quality benefits upstream than downstream, which is why we’re collaborating with others like NACWA who share the goal of encouraging best practices in order to maintain a quality water supply,” said Jim Mulhern, president and CEO of NMPF.

In addition to encouraging partnerships at the watershed level, both national organizations have committed to working together to educate policy makers and regulators on the environmental and economic impacts of such collaborative efforts.

“The Memorandum of Understanding between the National Association of Clean Water Agencies and the National Milk Producers Federation is an example of how we can work together to pilot innovative technologies to advance our shared water quality and environmental goals,” said Ken Kopocis, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Water at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. “EPA looks forward to working with NACWA, NMPF and their partners to further these efforts.”

“This MOU underscores the value that NMPF and NACWA are placing on the good work that farmers and ranchers are doing to protect and improve water resources in watersheds across the Nation,” said Jason Weller, Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). “The shared commitment to partnership, education, and innovation will benefit agriculture, communities, and the environment.”

NACWA and NMPF will also work together to leverage federal interest from Congress, via the Farm Bill and similar programs, to facilitate watershed-level partnerships and further develop anaerobic digestion capabilities nationwide.

“I applaud NACWA and NMPF for working together to address some of our most critical water quality and conservation challenges,” said Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. “These issues are critical to the long-term sustainability of our nation’s resources, and were front and center when we developed the conservation title of the 2014 Farm Bill. In strengthening farm bill conservation programs, we emphasized the importance of forming unique partnerships and maximizing resources to tackle common challenges. Agreements like this reflect that spirit of collaboration and will lay the groundwork for success in ensuring the long-term health and sustainability of our nation’s waters.”

Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, remarked that “we can and must stop runoff before it starts. This innovative partnership between the NACWA and the National Milk Producers Federation is a step in the right direction toward improving water quality in Ohio. I look forward to working with both organizations to ensure everyone has access to clean water.”

“I’m pleased to hear that dairy farmers and clean water agencies have volunteered to work together to find cost-effective ways to deal with nutrient management. Protecting our water resources should be a priority for all Americans, and this cooperative agreement is a great step toward achieving that goal”

said Representative Bob Gibbs (R-OH), Chairman of the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and member of the House Agriculture Committee.

“Two of our top priorities in Upstate New York are protecting natural resources and keeping farms in business, both of which are critical to the survival and prosperity of rural communities,” said Congressman Chris Gibson (R-NY), a member of the House Agriculture Committee. “Our dairy farmers work 365 days a year to provide us with fresh milk and support their families while safeguarding our watersheds. I am grateful to the National Association of Clean Water Agencies and the National Milk Producers Federation for partnering to give farmers and local stakeholders improved access to innovative, cost-effective clean water initiatives.”

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NACWA represents the interests of more than 300 public agencies and organizations that have made the pursuit of scientifically based, technically sound and cost effective laws and regulations their objective. NACWA members serve the majority of the sewered population in the United States and collectively treat and reclaim more than 18 billion gallons of wastewater daily.

The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF), based in Arlington, VA, develops and carries out policies that advance the well-being of dairy producers and the cooperatives they own. The members of NMPF's cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of more than 32,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies.