



Des Moines Water Works Lawsuit Wrong Approach

Ankeny, Iowa – Iowa Agriculture Water Alliance Executive Director Sean McMahon, of Cumming, issued the following statement regarding Des Moines Water Works' decision to pursue legal action against three counties in northwest Iowa for water quality concerns.

“The decision by Des Moines Water Works to file a lawsuit in federal court against three Iowa counties in a misguided attempt to force increased regulation on Iowa farms is the wrong approach. We need more collaboration and less confrontation.

“There is no evidence to suggest that a one-size-fits all regulatory scheme would lead to improved water quality. I’m skeptical that regulation would be nothing but a very costly and ineffective experiment due to the scale and variability of agriculture in Iowa that would squander several years of much needed actual progress.

“However, there is ample evidence that voluntary conservation practices tailored to specific fields, soil types, hydrology and geology will result in improved water quality.

“We still have much to do to improve water quality in the Raccoon River and throughout Iowa, but we are making progress. This is backed by an analysis of thousands of water samples from 41 locations in the Raccoon River Watershed from 1999-2014 that found nitrate concentrations decreased by nearly 25 percent over that time.

“The Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy was launched barely eighteen months ago, yet Des Moines Water Works has already claimed that it has failed. That’s like saying we’ve already lost the game when our team is down a run in the top half of

the first inning. We've only just begun to implement the strategy and this is no time to quit.

“Just last year, 2,400 Iowa farmers and land owners implemented \$22.5 million worth of conservation practices to prevent soil erosion and improve water quality, of which \$13 million came out of farmers' own pockets.

“We are working with Iowa farmers to implement practices that improve soil health and reduce nutrient loss while increasing productivity, profitability and environmental performance. Iowa producers are committed to improving water quality for all Iowans.”

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