

**REMARKS AT AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS COUNCIL
OF KANSAS CITY**

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Good afternoon. Thank you for inviting me to be with you today. Region 7 EPA's office in Kansas City, Kansas helps 15 million people -- living in Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas and nine tribal nations -- protect their health, safety, and long-term productivity.

First, I want to thank Bob Petersen for arranging a room at the American Royal in February for EPA to listen to farmers' and ranchers' concerns about the potential impact of particulate matter regulations. You probably know this topic as "farm dust." [show news article from May 23] Bob's generous offer will help EPA make a better decision when the Clean Air Act's health-based national standards get their five-year review this summer.

Bob's help allowed Region 7 to introduce our national science advisers into a very useful dialogue with ag producers and staff from local offices of the congressional delegations.

My colleagues in Region 7 serve a vast region of the American Heartland. From the gates of the Mississippi Delta, in southeast Missouri's Bootheel, to the flanks of the Rockies in western Nebraska's Sandhills, EPA maintains the environmental security of our region. And that region -- you all know this -- is the ag engine that powers our nation. Region 7 producers grow the crops that yield fully one-fifth of America's entire food, forage, fiber, and fuel cash value.

We at EPA have to understand American agriculture: Before the President appointed me to this post, I interviewed with my boss, EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson. She and I agreed: getting agriculture's regulatory relationship with EPA right is my "job one" as Region 7 Administrator.

I keep in my office a poster. It bluntly illustrates my point: it documents what you all know – or should know: Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas are # 3, 4, and 5 in ag's contribution to our nation's economic strength. And my Missouri friends: don't feel slighted. Without a single case of Lone Star arrogance, you feed more cow-calf pairs than any state except Texas.

In fact, Missourians farm as much ground as do your counterparts all the way from Lake Erie to the Chesapeake Bay. "Show Me," indeed. Show me the production.

Last week, Region 7 hosted EPA colleagues, from across the country, who work on scientific research and pollution cleanups. I welcomed them to what both Mayor Reardon and Mayor James like to call "Greater Kansas City": this busy metro area serving the nation's heartland. Greater KC spans two states, bridges three rivers, covers five counties, and binds together over 2 million hardworking people.

The second-largest metro area in Region 7, Kansas City functions as a trade, news, manufacturing, and social hub for more people within this region than does that other, larger urban area to the east. Which shall remain nameless -- it's the one whose players don't have the gumption to get their bats off their shoulders in extra innings.

We Kansas Citians have always worked in the hub. We specialize in the connecting side of life: in medical care and research, business enterprise and innovation, or food production and distribution.

And the Agricultural Business Council, or “AgBiz,” as I like to call it on my schedules, acts like a blacksmith in this powerful hub. Your members forge links. You build strong, flexible chains. They tie producers on our farms and ranches to brokers, manufacturers, shippers, customers, lenders and insurers across the nation, and around the world.

That’s why here, with you, today, I’m going to share the good news that links EPA to American agriculture. My agency engages your members – the nation’s agricultural producers -- in a dynamic regulatory relationship dedicated to the common enterprise of environmental care. Making this enterprise work as the Congress of the United States intended, four decades ago, depends on, and works best in, what I’ll call “the Kansas City Spirit.”

You’ve probably all seen Normal Rockwell’s famous painting, “Spirit of Kansas City.” He painted it, on special request from Joyce Hall, right after the 1951 floods swamped this bottomland on which we meet today. Joyce Hall knew – and Normal Rockwell captured -- why Kansas City worked: this city, and the wider hinterland it serves, thrive on a spirit born of mutual respect.

And Kansas City has remained vital and prosperous because the people who work here constantly renew that special spirit. They renew the spirit by forging common understandings – with customers, with lenders, with suppliers, and yes, even with regulators like the Environmental Protection Agency. Like you, we at EPA also have a vital job to do.

EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson understands how hard – and how smart – agricultural producers work to deliver food, forage, fuel, and fiber to this nation and the world. A couple weeks ago, I joined my boss in Iowa for a wide-ranging day in that agricultural powerhouse. Up before dawn to interview with Iowa's most-watched farm broadcaster, slogging through cold rain in rubber boots and a ball cap, Administrator Jackson talked with a cattleman, inspected a biodiesel refinery, swapped jokes and questions with corn growers.

Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack, her host, couldn't say enough nice things about my boss' commitment to getting this crucial EPA-ag relationship right. And he told her, "Just because a room full of Iowa farmers isn't grinning and woo-hooing, doesn't mean you haven't earned their respect." And she did.

A few days later, Administrator Jackson and Secretary Vilsack co-authored an important op-ed in Iowa's leading paper. In the *Des Moines Register*, EPA's leader saluted the ingenuity, dedication, and environmental commitment of American farmers and ranchers. Ask me after this talk and I'll send it to you. It deserves wider reading across the countryside at a time when loud voices, some on Capitol Hill and some in the ag trade press, question our agency's competence, challenge our fairness, and even impugn our motives.

I want to make a simple point today: all of us in this room – private-sector producers as well as public-sector environmental protectors – need to focus on what's right with the EPA/ag relationship. And to work together to make that relationship even better.

As a historian of the American environment, I understand that every relationship with a regulatory component will always generate occasional

disagreement. But I urge all parties in the EPA/ag relationship to work through these disagreements responsibly, factually, and aimed firmly toward the future.

To get EPA's relationship with American agriculture into better focus, let's deal in facts and realities. And let's proceed in that "Kansas City Spirit" of mutual respect and understanding.

You all know that collaborative efforts enable farmers and ranchers to operate economically, sustainably, and responsibly. In fact, just last month, the new U.S. Farm and Ranch Alliance stood at this podium to tell you about their new collaborative campaign. The Alliance links all sorts of producers, across the country, in a mutual effort to strengthen agriculture's image among the 98% of Americans who do not farm and ranch.

Key to the Alliance's focus is a campaign aimed at helping non-farmers set aside prejudices and rhetoric to focus on facts and understanding. Have you encountered some of those misunderstandings and prejudices? Of course you have. All of us have.

EPA faces a similar challenge. We seek – and I respectfully suggest we have earned -- the same mutual understanding from the Ag sector that producers are seeking from the American public. We at EPA want to get past prejudices, dump the bumper-sticker rhetoric, and keep collaborating to maintain a strong, healthy, adaptable regulatory relationship with farmers and ranchers.

My boss has, time and again – on Capitol Hill, in the media, and during her visit to Iowa – has stressed that America's farmers and ranchers deserve great credit for taking significant steps – and making substantial investments -- to protect the environment as they feed the world's billions.

In turn, I hope, and expect, reasonable and responsible ag leaders will personally understand and publicly appreciate EPA's indispensable role – and EPA's vital job – in securing our neighbors' public health and safety and our nation's long-term environmental security.

I also want to debunk a few myths and reduce a lot of the rhetoric about EPA as well. These mischaracterizations are more than simple distractions; they prevent real dialogue to address our greatest problems.

As I'm sure you would agree, facts matter and we all have a responsibility to ensure that the American people have facts and the truth in front of them, particularly when fictions are pushed by special interests with an investment in the outcome. I am here to set the record straight on several issues.

Let me give you five examples:

One is the claim that EPA is attempting to expand regulation of dust from farms. We have no plans to do so, but let me be clear, the Clean Air Act passed by Congress mandates that the Agency routinely review the science of various pollutants, including particulate matter, which is directly responsible for heart attacks and premature deaths. EPA's independent science panel is currently reviewing that science, and a decision by the Administrator is expected this summer.

Another mischaracterization is the notion that EPA intends to regulate the emissions from cows – what is commonly referred to as a “Cow Tax.” This myth was started in 2008 by a lobbyist and, though quickly debunked by the non-partisan, independent group “fact-check.org, it still lives on. The truth is - EPA is proposing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a responsible, careful manner and we have even exempted agricultural sources from regulation.

Another example involves spray drift. While no one supports pesticides wafting into our schools and communities, EPA does not support a “no-spray drift policy.” EPA has been on the record numerous times saying this, but the incorrect belief that EPA desires to regulate all spray drift persists. We have reached out to National Association of State Departments of Agriculture and other key stakeholders. Working with them, we have been able to identify critical issues and we will continue our efforts to resolve them.

Yet another mischaracterization is the false notion that EPA is planning on mandating Federal numeric nutrient limits on various States. Again, let me be clear: EPA is not working on any federal numeric nutrient limits. The case of Florida is unique – the last Administration made a determination that federal numeric nutrient standards were necessary in Florida, requiring EPA to develop such standards.

And finally is the notion that EPA intended to treat spilled milk in the same way as spilled oil. This is simply wrong. Rather, EPA itself proposed to and now just recently has exempted milk and dairy containers from the rule. This exemption needed to be finalized because the law passed by Congress was written broadly enough to cover milk containers. Our work with the dairy industry prompted EPA to develop an exemption and make sure the standards of the law are met in a commonsense way.

Contrary to the myths is the reality I spoke of earlier. EPA is in close consultation with America’s farmers and ranchers. We have listened to their concerns and made them a part of the work we do.

When EPA proposed higher renewable fuels production mandates under RFS 2, we heard – again through extensive public comments and direct conversations – the ethanol industry’s concerns with the analysis of

greenhouse gas impacts, which EPA was conducting under a requirement from Congress.

We addressed their concerns, and we now have a rule that encourages vast innovation, respects the needs of agricultural communities, and is expected to create jobs and increase farmers' incomes by \$13 billion annually by 2022.

Here's how we learn ag's views at region 7. My R7 Ag team and I have had extensive conversations with farmers, ranchers, agri-businessmen, and state Ag directors.

- The following is just a sample of external outreach:
 - ✓ NE Cattlemen's Association Conference
 - ✓ Heartland "Animal Manure Mgmt. Roundtable"
 - ✓ Particulate matter meetings in KC and Des Moines
 - ✓ N.W. IA AFO / CAFO tour
 - ✓ KS Rural Center's Ag Sustainability Conf.
 - ✓ KC Ag Business Council Mtg. participation
 - ✓ Flint Hills Beef Festival
 - ✓ National FACA (Farm, Ranch, & Rural Community Committee)
 - ✓ Iowa State Fair in August
 - ✓ Regular interviews with farm broadcasters including Brownfield Ag Network in Jeff City
- Internal outreach: now in its fifth year, the Region 7 Agriculture Team organized activities to improve information exchange between Region 7 staff and the agricultural community. The activities also improve staff's knowledge of agronomic science and agricultural conservation practices.
- As part of Ag Week in May 2011, activities included panels about conservation practices, a panel of farm broadcasters and

presentations on the science and human health impacts that drive state and federal regulation of particulate matter and air emissions. Cattle producers and others shared information about the Kansas Smoke Management Plan. The weeklong sessions were well attended by EPA Region 7 scientists and technical program staff.

We look forward to working with all of you towards solutions to air and water quality challenges while maintaining our valuable agricultural economy. We are committed to building stronger relationships with the agricultural community.

Before closing, Bob asked me to provide updates on a couple of issues. For example, nutrient-related problems exist in all four states in Region 7. We're seeing more toxic algal blooms, which can be very harmful to humans and animals. Even the non-toxic varieties of algae cause problems. Algae saps oxygen from our lakes and streams, which can be devastating to the aquatic life.

Algae and nutrients can cause problems with our drinking water. Decreasing nutrient loads to waters is going to be a big job, and it may take some time; nutrient pollution has been on the rise for the last 50 years, and we won't be able to get rid of the pollution overnight. We're going to have to work together to be successful. States, federal agencies, conservation districts, private landowners, and other stakeholders can all contribute, and all those contributions will result in a significant change for the better.

The potential for innovation is huge. Let's work together to find better ways to keep nitrogen and phosphorous where they provide the most benefit.

On March 16, 2011 the Agency issued "Recommended Elements of a State Framework for Managing Nitrogen and Phosphorus Pollution" (often referred to as the Nancy Stoner memo). This framework reaffirms EPA's commitment to partnering with states and stakeholders to accelerate the reduction of nitrogen and phosphorus loadings to our nation's waters.

The framework envisions development of watershed scale plans for targeting adoption of the most effective agricultural practices and other loading reduction measures along with numeric nutrient criteria and schedules. Development of numeric criteria takes lots of effort, time and data; however, there are many things that can be done while we work to get the criteria right.

We've seen successful interim efforts across the country, including the State of Kansas (Kansas has been implementing its Nutrient Reduction Plan for several years); we can apply those approaches locally where they'll yield the greatest outcomes.

With regard to greenhouse gas emissions, EPA is not implementing subpart JJ (Manure Management) of 40 CFR part 98 using funds provided in its FY2010 or 2011 appropriations, due to a Congressional restriction prohibiting the expenditure of funds for this purpose. EPA will not review any GHG information submitted under subpart JJ for so long as the restriction remains in place.

I encourage you to take advantage of the regional office in KCK. Feel free to contact me or any of our staff with questions about environmental programs. Myself, Josh Svaty and others welcome the opportunity to come to your meetings -- to hear from you and provide information on EPA programs.

Our role at EPA in protecting human health and the environment will not always be in perfect alignment with the agricultural industry, but if we work together and communicate clearly, there is no reason we cannot achieve mutually agreeable goals.

In closing, we recognize the agriculture community's efforts to protect our environment while striving to maintain a sustainable and abundant food supply. Again, we are seeking the same respect that the ag community is seeking from the public through the new U.S. Farm and Ranch Alliance. Good neighbors work together. They respect each other's needs and rights.

Thank you.