



**COUNTY OF DEL NORTE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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June 13, 2017

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Andrew Hanson
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20004

RE: Definition of Waters of the United States under the Clean Water Act

Dear Mr. Hanson:

The Del Norte County Board of Supervisors appreciates this opportunity to provide comments and additional information regarding the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) review of the definition of Waters of the United States (WOTUS) under the Clean Water Act. The County is very pleased to learn that the EPA seeks to revisit the definitions in the current WOTUS rule and reexamine the approach taken to draft the rule.

Del Norte County is already among one of the most heavily regulated communities in the country. A high percentage of the land in the County is owned by federal and state governments with the concentration of population and development occurring in the coastal zone, which is further regulated by the California Coastal Commission. Additionally, the two main rivers in the County, the Klamath and Smith, are National Wild and Scenic Rivers, which generates further regulatory oversight on our community.

We are also in a litigious region, where regardless of the goals, we are only a lawsuit away under the rule from having even more regulation placed on our County maintenance or other activities.

With these issues in mind, we do not believe the current rule defining WOTUS is necessary. The increased regulation is onerous, burdensome and expensive, particularly for a small, rural community like ours. The cost, time and effort required by the expansion of the definition of WOTUS would not have a return on investment for our citizens or the environment.

The County greatly appreciates EPA's engagement of state and local governments and Clean Water Act stakeholders. We are hopeful this engagement will ensure greater clarity and the most feasible application. As the EPA moves forward with rewriting the WOTUS rule, we strongly encourage you to continue to engage with local stakeholders, including those who bring a rural community perspective, in crafting a more reasonable rule.

We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of these comments and look forward to continuing to work with the EPA.

Sincerely,

Chris Howard, Chair
Board of Supervisors
Del Norte County, California