



MFGC UPDATE

For members of the Michigan Floriculture Growers Council

June/July 2014

MFGC Office

235 N Pine St
Lansing, MI 48933

Calendar of Events

September 11 or 12, 2014
Metro Detroit area

December 9, 2014
ANNUAL MEETING
Grand Rapids

2014 Board of Directors

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MDFGA Appointee

Scott Stiles

Dear Member,

In a continuing effort to inform legislators on the floriculture/greenhouse industry and educate the industry on the legislative process and how to have a positive impact, the MFGC Board of Directors coordinated a tour of Wenke Greenhouses and a panel discussion on Monday, June 16.

Many MFGC members attended, as well as several legislators for a tour of Wenke Greenhouses and to participate in a panel discussion that focused on energy issues of the greenhouse industry. The subject matter of this meeting was driven by the intense weather of the past winter and the price of natural gas, particularly from third party providers.

We want to thank the Wenke family for their generosity in hosting the meeting, providing food and drinks and giving a tour of their facility. We appreciate their time and effort.

We also want to thank our panelist that provided great information from legislation, how to work with energy companies, energy audits and grants and who to contact for answers to your questions. If you missed this meeting and are interested in this type of information, please contact the MFGC office.

Panelist:

Greg Moore, representing Senator Mike Nofs - Chair of the Senate Energy Committee

Jake Stasiak of Midwest Energy Group

Lisa Gustafson of Consumers Energy

Lisa Eple of USDA Rural Development

We were very fortunate to have Senator Tonya Schuitmaker, Representative Margaret O'Brien and Representative Sean McCann attend and hear the concerns and priorities of the industry.

The next Membership meeting will be in the metro Detroit area in September. If you would like to host the meeting, please contact the MFGC office. Also let us know what topics you would like to discuss.



Lisa Ambrosia (Wenke) with tour group #1

WMGA Appointee

Policy Chair
Bill Tuinier

Membership Chair
Ken Tuinier

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Members**

Great Lakes Greenhouses
Kalamazoo

GreenDorr Greenhouse
Dorr

Joe Theisen Farm
St. Clair



Lorence Wenke with the 2nd group touring Wenke's



Panel Discussion



Attendees listening to the discussion issues



Greg Moore, Staff of Senator Mike Nofs



Representative Margaret O'Brien



Representative Sean McCann



Senator Schuitmaker & Exec. Director Val Vail-Shirey



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Waters of the United States: New Rule Proposed by EPA

Provided by Michigan Farm Bureau

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed a new rule under the Clean Water Act that redefines what can be regulated as a Water of the United States. It is open for public comment for 90 days from the date it is published in the Federal Register. Despite EPA's repeated assurances, this rule will significantly impact agriculture nationwide.

The proposed rule is an overreach by the EPA. The Obama Administration needs to direct EPA to rescind the rule. Farmers should contact members of Congress and demand administrative action. Direct communication to EPA explaining the rule's negative impact will also be needed to stop the implementation of this rule.

How the Rule Impacts Agriculture:

- Congress and the Supreme Court have stated repeatedly that the Clean Water Act is not meant to regulate all waters. Its original intent was to protect waters involved in interstate commerce, yet the proposed EPA rule ignores this directive.
- EPA's expansion of what it considers a water of the United States will interfere with my ability to farm. It limits private property rights, because EPA will be able to regulate farming practices on land wherever a "water of the United States" is present.
- Man-made private agricultural drains, intermittent streams, and water and wetlands in riparian areas and floodplains will now be regulated regardless of how infrequently they have water in them and will be used to determine that small and otherwise isolated wetlands are waters of the United States.
- While EPA claims that agricultural exemptions do not change, those exemptions do not include leveling or earth moving, or application of manure, chemical fertilizers, or pesticides. They also ONLY apply to land already under cultivation. The rule will inhibit placing new land into agricultural production.
- EPA's "Interpretive Rule" allowing NRCS- approved conservation practices in Waters of the U.S. does not give any additional farming exemptions to farmers-instead it adds a requirement that any practices they use in Waters of the U.S. have to meet NRCS standards.
- The proposed rule will make Michigan's wetlands law out of compliance with the Clean Water Act. As a result, Michigan may lose its ability to manage its own waters.
- Permitting will become more difficult. EPA has no time limit or requirement to grant permits. Mitigation requirements will mean long delays and huge expenses for farmers in many more areas than before. Michigan's state program includes deadlines for response to permit applications; if Michigan loses its state program, we will be subject to EPA's inefficient process.

EPA AIMING FOR SPRING 2015 FOR FINAL WATERS RULE

POLITICO July 10,2014

EPA is aiming to release "next spring" its final Clean Water Act rule defining "Waters of the U.S.," Deputy Administrator Bob Perciasepe told POLITICO Pro during the ASA meeting. In the coming months EPA plans to have the rule reviewed by its Science Advisory Board and will take into account public comments, which are due October 20, prior to finalizing the measure, Perciasepe said at the forum. While a lot of concerns have been raised about the rule, Perciasepe said the measure would result in few changes for farmers. More on Perciasepe's remarks available here: <http://politico.pro/1qkJwhx>

EPA leadership had a busy day Wednesday with Administrator Gina McCarthy in Missouri talking to farmers, and Perciasepe spending the morning defending the proposed waters rule to the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology. His testimony is available here: <http://1.usa.gov/TTr9W2>

Consider taking action today:

- Invite Congressional Representatives to events and to your farms/greenhouse, and talk to them about the negative impact on your farms/greenhouse and why the rule must not be finalized.
- Write letters or visit your Congressional Representatives and ask them to take action on stopping the rule.
- Communicate with the EPA by visiting their website at <http://www.regulations.gov/#!submitComment;D=EPA-HQ-OW-2011-0880-0001>

Sample letter that can be used when contacting your Representatives:

Dear Administrator McCarthy,

I oppose the Environmental Protection Agency's implementation of its proposed rule on the Definition of the Waters of the United States under the Clean Water Act, Docket No. EPA-HQ-OW-2011-0880. While EPA has stated this rule will offer clarity, simplify the regulatory process, and improve protection of water resources, I believe the proposed rule does none of those things. Instead, this rule will hurt the agriculture industry, as well as many other businesses. It will damage the American economy that depends on the services agriculture and other industries provide. Further, it will interfere with states' efforts to develop water protection programs that really work and which do not depend on such burdensome regulation. The rule does not benefit the environment like EPA says it will. The rule must be rescinded to fix these problems. Thank you for your time and attention.

Respectfully submitted,
Your Name

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