

36. WATER QUALITY AND WATERSHED PROJECTS

We support:

1. Sound scientific peer-reviewed data being used as the basis for treatment of non-point sources under the Clean Water Act or other similar water quality laws at the federal or state level.
2. Funding research on best management practices (BMPs) of agricultural crop production products.
3. The involvement of agriculture, including county Farm Bureaus and drainage districts, in watershed group planning efforts.
4. Increased funding for comprehensive watershed planning and voluntary, incentive-based implementation of BMPs as a result of the planning.
5. Programs to educate farmers and the general public of the need to protect and/or improve water quality and the various BMPs to accomplish those goals.
6. Farmer adoption of the Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy (NLRS) through voluntary implementation of BMPs.
7. The development of new and the enhancement of existing incentives for adopting voluntary BMPs on all private land to improve water quality and wildlife habitat.
8. Policies made regarding the Gulf of Mexico hypoxic zone to be backed by reliable, broad-based, scientific research. We should unite with other like-minded stakeholders to form a coalition on the issue to:
 - A. Coordinate a plan of action.
 - B. Communicate with each other, the general public, elected officials, and members regarding the hypoxia area.
 - C. Evaluate current research data and encourage further research on the hypoxic area and issues related to it.
 - D. Use all means at our disposal to address the issue in a way that gives proper consideration to the impact it has on agricultural production.
9. A portion of water consumption fees collected from any user of water from a drinking water supply lake be used for payments to landowners and tenants who adopt conservation practices within the watershed of the lake.

We oppose:

1. Using mandatory methods to address agricultural, non-point source issues related to Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) of pollutants in streams.
2. Any increased regulation on tile drainage from farm fields, including designating water flow from farm fields through or over conveyances, such as drain tile or grass waterways, as a point source of pollution under the Clean Water Act.
3. Fines, assessments, and penalties on non-point source pollutions allegedly caused by agriculture but not confirmed by sound scientific peer-reviewed data.
4. Water management programs that restrict the ability of landowners to provide effective drainage and flood control in rural and urban areas.