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Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative/Natural Resources Conservation Service Request of Information: Association of State Drinking Water Administrators/Ground Water Protection Council Submit Comments

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The Association of State Drinking Water Administrators and Ground Water Protection Council submitted April 7th comments to the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service ("NRCS") in response to a Request for Information addressing:

- Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative ("MRBI")
- National Water Quality Initiative ("NWQI")

See Docket I.D.: NRCS-2023-0004-0001.

The NRCS is also requesting input on how it can:

- Streamline and improve MRBI and NWQI to increase efficiencies.
- Expand access for underserved communities and producers.

A number of active NWQI planning watersheds for FY23 include areas in Arkansas.

The Association of State Drinking Water Administrators and Ground Water Protection Council describe themselves as professional associations:

... that represent the collective interest of the nation's state drinking water and ground water programs responsible for implementation of Federal Safe Drinking Water Act regulations and voluntary source water and wellhead protection programs and protection actions.

Their comments are stated to primarily focus on the NWQI components that can specifically include source water protection watersheds but also note that:

... the NWQI watershed plans and MRBI nutrient loss reduction strategies, along with associated conservation practices implemented by landowners, provide opportunities to expand outcomes, leverage partnerships, and help protect surface and groundwater sources of drinking water.

Recommendations offered by the organizations include:

- Expand the Prioritization of NWQI Source Water Protection Watersheds
- Expand NWQI Outcomes by Increasing the Number of Source Water Protection Watersheds
- Expand NWQI Participation and Outcomes
- Increase Coordination and Planning with State Source Water Protection Programs
- Add Source Water Protection Practices for Metrics to Measure NWQI Outcomes

A copy of the comments can be downloaded [here](#).