



# Briefing Notice

## Farming & Water Quality: Conservation Policies Working to Reduce Nutrient Loss

Monday, November 2

2:00 PM – 3:30 PM

Capitol Visitor Center Room 203-02 (Senate side)

East Capitol Street & First Street NE

Please RSVP to expedite check-in: [www.eesi.org/110215water#RSVP](http://www.eesi.org/110215water#RSVP)

Live webcast (connection permitting) will be streamed at: [www.eesi.org/livecast](http://www.eesi.org/livecast)

From the Gulf of Mexico's dead zone to the Des Moines Waterworks lawsuit against drainage districts, water quality challenges are growing and the Farm Bill's conservation programs are helping farmers in their efforts to reduce nutrient loss. The **Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI)** invites you to a briefing examining these water quality challenges and how stakeholders are partnering to implement effective, voluntary, farm-level conservation practices that will provide multiple benefits both to rural and urban areas. The discussion will highlight Farm Bill conservation policies in action, which are helping advance best management practices that improve drinking water quality and farmers' bottom lines by enhancing in-field nutrient management. Farmers know that conserving nutrients makes both economic and environmental sense, but substantial work remains to achieve the widespread adoption necessary to address water quality and stave off regulation.

Speakers for this forum are:

- **Jonathan Coppess**, Clinical Assistant Professor of Law and Policy, University of Illinois
- **Tariq Baloch**, Water Utility Plant Manager, City of Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- **Leon Corzine**, family farm owner, Illinois
- **Adam Sharp**, Vice President of Public Policy, Ohio Farm Bureau
- **John Larson**, Executive Director, American Farmland Trust

Ongoing water quality issues, such as phosphorus-driven, harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie and high nitrate levels in municipal drinking water in the Midwest, are bringing heightened attention to the nutrient loss challenge for water utilities and farmers. The 2014 Farm Bill's Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is demonstrating how farmers can partner with interested parties (commodity groups, NGO's, agribusinesses, etc.) to further the adoption of these voluntary best management practices addressing the critical issue of water quality. RCPP encourages partnerships between agricultural producers and stakeholders to address regional problems while maintaining or improving agricultural productivity.

The discussion will showcase efforts by farmers and their allied organizations and businesses to implement RCPP in modern commercial farming operations. For instance, they are adapting precision agricultural technology tools and field-level data to help analyze and understand nutrient loss and conservation practices so as to improve farm and field management.

Administered by the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), RCPP has \$1.2 billion in federal funding, with USDA partners providing matching funds for a total of \$2.8 billion through 2018. RCPP combines and reinforces four pre-existing NRCS conservation programs.

**This event is free and open to the public.**

**For more information, contact Jessie Stolark at [jstolark@eesi.org](mailto:jstolark@eesi.org) or (202) 662-1885**

