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September 4, 2014

The Honorable Bill Shuster
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Shuster:

The National Cotton Council (NCC) appreciates your efforts to pass H.R. 5078, the Waters of the United States Regulatory Overreach Protection Act. We are urging other Members to vote favorably for this bill.

The NCC is the central organization of the U.S. cotton industry representing producers, ginner, warehousemen, merchants, cooperatives, textile manufacturers, and cottonseed processors and merchandisers in 17 states stretching from California to the Carolinas.

The NCC appreciates that this bill will mandate the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to retract the Interpretive Rule. We believe that this rule will actually restrict the exemptions that Congress intended for agriculture regarding Section 404 permits. Furthermore, we believe that if this rule is not pulled back, it will have an unfavorable effect on the long-standing relationship between the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service and the farming community and will actually result in a reduction of conservation practices being implemented.

The NCC believes that the Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) Rule developed by the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers goes far beyond the Congressional intent of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and fails to reach its goal of clarification. We also believe that this rule has the potential to cause profound negative impacts on agriculture. We believe that the alternative offered by H.R. 5078 to require the agencies to consult with state and local officials for the development of consensus solutions in defining the jurisdictional scope of the CWA is reasonable and prudent.

Thank you again for your leadership regarding this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark Lange".

Mark Lange
President & CEO