**EPA REPORT: IOWA FACTORY FARM PROGRAM SHOWN TO VIOLATE FEDERAL CLEAN WATER ACT**

**Environmental Protection Agency Report Validates Local Activists Complaint That Iowa DNR Has Failed To Adequately Regulate Factory Farm Water Pollution**

WASHINGTON, D.C.///July 13, 2012///The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a long-awaited report Thursday, finding that critical elements of Iowa’s program to regulate water pollution from factory farms, or “Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations” (CAFOs) fail to meet minimum federal requirements. The report is a response to a nearly five-year-old petition by Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement (Iowa CCI), Environmental Integrity Project (EIP), and the Sierra Club, which alleged widespread failures to regulate illegal factory farm discharges and asked EPA to withdraw Iowa’s authority to run the state’s Clean Water Act permitting program.

**EPA’s findings include:**

* **Iowa DNR does not issue permits to factory farms when required by the Clean Water Act.**
* **Iowa DNR does not have an acceptable system to figure out which factory farms need Clean Water Act permits in the first place, and has an inadequate inspection program.**
* **Iowa DNR failed to act in response to CAFO Clean Water Act violations or failed to follow its own response policy in nearly half of cases reviewed by EPA.**
* **Iowa DNR does not assess adequate penalties following CAFO violations of the Clean Water Act.**

**“We need stronger laws, tougher enforcement, and a fully-funded DNR,”** said Larry Ginter, a CCI member and family farmer from Rhodes, Iowa. **“It’s time for Governor Branstad to embrace our agenda and move away from the failed corporate policies of deregulation and privatization he has set us on.”**

EPA’s investigation report sets out several deficiencies that will require state action to comply with the Clean Water Act and begin properly regulating CAFO pollution, and requires Iowa DNR to respond with a proposed work plan within 60 days.

**“EPA’s investigation affirms that when factory farms pollute Iowa rivers and streams, the state looks the other way instead of enforcing the Clean Water Act,”** said Tarah Heinzen, attorney with Environmental Integrity Project. **“EPA’s findings are a critical first step, but the real work of fixing Iowa’s broken factory farm program and restoring water quality is just beginning,” Heinzen continued.**

**“EPA correctly concluded that an effective program will include the need for more significant penalties for CAFOs that discharge pollutants without a permit. Penalties must be more than just a cost of doing business,"** said Wally Taylor, Legal Chair of the Iowa Chapter of the Sierra Club.

Although the Iowa Department of Natural Resources has documented more than 800 illegal discharges from CAFOs over the past 15 years, and has identified more than 500 polluted waters throughout the state, it has yet to issue a single Clean Water Act discharge permit to a confinement operation, or even to update its regulations to comply with federal rules for CAFOs that discharge pollution. A 2007 study by the Iowa Policy Project stated that factory farm manure “may be the largest agricultural polluter of Iowa’s streams and lakes”.

The EPA investigation report and citizen petition are available at <http://epa.gov/region7/water/>.

**ABOUT THE PETITIONERS**

The Environmental Integrity Project (http://www.environmentalintegrity.org) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization established in March of 2002 by former EPA enforcement attorneys to advocate for effective enforcement of environmental laws.  EIP has three goals:  1) to provide objective analyses of how the failure to enforce or implement environmental laws increases pollution and affects public health; 2) to hold federal and state agencies, as well as individual corporations, accountable for failing to enforce or comply with environmental laws; and 3) to help local communities obtain the protection of environmental laws.

Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement (http://www.iowacci.org) is a 37-year-old statewide non-profit grassroots organization. Iowa CCI has led the fight against factory farms in Iowa for the past 15 years and has pushed for better environmental and permitting laws for factory farms on the state and national level.

Sierra Club is the nation's oldest grassroots environmental organization. Its 1.4 million members and supporters work together to protect our communities and the planet. Through litigation and administrative and legislative advocacy, the Sierra Club has worked for the past decade to improve controls over factory farm water and air pollution.

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