



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 6
1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200
DALLAS TX 75202-2733

MAY - 8 2013

Mr. Mike Malone
President and CEO
Northwest Arkansas Council
4100 Corporate Center Drive
Suite 205
Springdale, Arkansas 72762

Dear Mr. Malone:

Thank you for your March 21, 2013, letter requesting that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6 suspend its ongoing efforts to develop a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the Illinois River Watershed (IRW) in Arkansas and Oklahoma. For your information, we received earlier and similar requests from Tyson Foods, Inc. (Tyson), and others. We are enclosing a copy of our response to Tyson's request for your review.

As indicated in our response to Tyson, we have given full consideration to the request. However, the EPA does not believe suspending the agency's current model and TMDL development efforts in the Illinois River Watershed is necessary or prudent. We believe continuing the current work is vital to the shared goal of improved water quality in the Illinois River and its upstream tributaries in northwest Arkansas. Given the time and resources required to achieve the current level of model development, the EPA believes completion of the modeling efforts and development of any TMDL(s) is likely to be a lengthy process. Therefore, the EPA believes it is important to continue moving forward with its ongoing modeling and TMDL work. In the event that the prospective stressor-response study is completed and yields an alternative EPA approved phosphorus criterion, the EPA will replace the current Scenic Rivers criterion (0.037 mg/l phosphorus) with the new value and reassess the results of modeled load reduction scenarios.

Thank you very much for sharing your concerns. If you have further questions, please contact me at (214) 665-7101 or Claudia Hosch, Associate Director for NPDES Permits and TMDLs, at (214) 665-7170.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "WK Honker".

William K. Honker, P.E.
Director, Water Quality Protection Division

Enclosure