



COMMITTEE ON  
**SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY**  
Lamar Smith, Chairman

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## **Statement from Andy Biggs (R-Ariz.)**

*The Future of WOTUS: Examining the Role of States*

**Chairman Biggs:** Welcome to today's hearing, "The Future of WOTUS: Examining the Role of States." I want to thank our expert panel of witnesses for being here today and agreeing to testify about this important topic.

The Waters of the United States rule, or WOTUS, issued by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2015, amounted to one of the biggest federal overreaches in modern history. Not only did the rule's flimsy definitions and underlying science mean that the agency had the ability to regulate private land, but it also placed significant financial burdens on some of our country's hardest workers.

I am very pleased to have representatives here today from my home state of Arizona to discuss how this rule would affect them and what changes they believe would make water regulations better for this country.

We all want to be good stewards of the environment. We also want to be good stewards for the people we are here in Washington to represent. When a federal agency overlooks the needs of American citizens, we in Congress have a duty to ask questions and address the concerns of our constituents.

For example, when WOTUS was proposed, there was a large outcry from stakeholders across the nation that the rule's vague definitions regarding navigable water could include sometimes-dry drainage ditches on private farmland. It is absurd to consider a dry ditch "navigable." Our nation depends on the hard work of farmers and ranchers: these men and women simply don't have the time to deal with bureaucratic nonsense. Of course, it's not just them who suffer: costly and unnecessary government mandates have drastic economic impacts on each and every one of us.

The shortcomings of WOTUS are so self-evident that it is not surprising this onerous rule has been challenged across the country. And now we can point to a very encouraging action from the new administration: President Trump recently issued an executive order directing EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers to review the WOTUS rule.

I applaud the administration for heeding the calls of Americans. A revision to the 2015 rule is desperately needed to provide greater clarity to states and stakeholders. Instead of rushing forward with burdensome federal regulations, the government needs to do its due diligence and propose a rule that is helpful, not harmful.

Today we will hear ideas about how some of those fixes to the regulation should look. Witnesses will inform Congress how federal water regulations affect them and what they need from the government to continue operating effectively.

I look forward to a knowledgeable and substantive discussion.

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