The Fertilizer Institute
Nourish, Replenish, Grow

Chris Jahn
President

November 19, 2014

The Honorable John Shimkus
Chairman, Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy
Energy & Commerce Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Tonko
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy
Energy & Commerce Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

RE: November 19, 2014 Hearing Entitled: "Cyanotoxins in Drinking Water."

Dear Chairman Shimkus and Ranking Member Tonko:

On behalf of the members of The Fertilizer Institute (TFI), thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the November 19, 2014 hearing entitled "Cyanotoxins in Drinking Water." Our comments below will focus on the fertilizer industry's continued commitment to environmental stewardship by providing an overview of the many actions we are undertaking to improve the adoption of fertilizer best management practices to improve the sustainability, efficiency and productivity of agricultural systems, which can subsequently reduce nutrient runoff and positively impact water quality.

The Fertilizer Institute is the leading voice of the fertilizer industry, representing the public policy, communication and statistical needs of producers, manufacturers, retailers and transporters of fertilizer. The Institute's members play a key role in producing and distributing vital crop nutrients, such as nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, which are used to replenish soils throughout the United States that in turn produce healthy and abundant supplies of food, fiber and fuel.

The World's population is predicted to reach 9.4 billion people by 2050. Industry experts agree that increased food production will only be achieved by intensified crop production and not by an expanded arable land base. As a result, commercial fertilizers have a critical role to play in boosting crop production to the levels necessary to meet the demands of this rapidly growing world population. Crop nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and secondary and micronutrients such as sulfur, calcium, zinc and iron are responsible for between 40 and 60 percent of today's total food production and will be a necessary component in producing

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nutritious food in the most environmentally sensitive manner possible.

4R Nutrient Stewardship

Meeting global food demand is not enough and the fertilizer industry today is also committed to promoting science-based, sustainable fertilizer best management practices that boost crop production while minimizing impacts to the environment. At the heart of that commitment is what is known as 4R nutrient stewardship, a framework to achieve cropping system goals, such as increased production, increased farmer profitability, enhanced environmental protection and improved sustainability.

The 4R nutrient stewardship principles are the same globally, but how they are used locally varies depending on field and site specific characteristics such as soil, cropping system, management techniques and climate. The scientific principles of the 4R framework include:

Right Source – Ensure a balanced supply of essential nutrients, considering both naturally available sources and the characteristics of specific products, in plant available forms.

Right Rate – Assess and make decisions based on soil nutrient supply and plant demand.

Right Time – Assess and make decisions based on the dynamics of crop uptake, soil supply, nutrient loss risks, and field operation logistics.

Right Place – Address root-soil dynamics and nutrient movement, and manage spatial variability within the field to meet site-specific crop needs and limit potential losses from the field.

It is important to stress that all four "Rs" must be used together because there is no single practice or "silver bullet" that will prevent nutrients from being lost to the environment.

In 2011, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) revised its standard for managing farm nutrients with a goal of encouraging farmers to employ new technologies to reduce nutrient runoff and improve water quality. The 4Rs are a component of this Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Practice Standard Code 590. For more information on 4R nutrient stewardship, I invite you to visit http://www.nutrientstewardship.com.

4R Research Fund: Demonstrating the Impacts of 4R Nutrient Stewardship

In addition to the 4R Nutrient Stewardship Program, the fertilizer industry has established the 4R Research Fund with the goal of developing sustainability indicators and environmental impact data for implementation of 4R nutrient stewardship across North America. It provides needed resource support with a focus on measuring and documenting the economic, social and environmental impacts of 4R Nutrient Stewardship. The fertilizer industry has already committed $7 million toward the research fund.

Having just completed its first year in existence, to date the fund has granted nearly $2.4 million in support of science-based research aimed at addressing cropping system productivity and concerns regarding nutrient losses into the environment. USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS), for example, has been awarded funds for a project in partnership with Heidelberg University, Ohio State University, The Nature Conservancy and the International Plant Nutrition

Institute (IPNI) to evaluate the impacts of adopting practices associated with 4R Nutrient Stewardship, as well as the impact of the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) 4R Certification program on crop productivity and profitability, water quality, and perceptions of growers, nutrient service providers and residents. For additional information on the 4R Research fund and the list of current projects, I invite you to visit http://www.nutrientstewardship.com/funding.

4R Nutrient Stewardship Certification Program

This year, the agriculture community in Ohio, specifically in the Western Lake Erie Basin launched the 4R Nutrient Stewardship Certification Program for fertilizer retailers. The program is a stakeholder driven initiative aimed at the long-term improvement of Lake Erie's water quality. This new program provides a consistent, recognized standard for agricultural retailers in Indiana, Michigan and Ohio where surrounding waters drain into Lake Erie.

The 4R Nutrient Stewardship Certification Program ensures that participating agricultural retailers, service providers and other certified professionals utilize proven best management practices based on the 4Rs when providing agronomic advice or services to farmers. This approach provides a science-based framework for plant nutrition management and sustained crop production, while considering specific individual farms' needs. We are pleased to inform you that 49 agricultural retailers have already signed up for the program. Requirements and additional details about the program are available at www.4Rcertified.org.

Increased Fertilizer Use Efficiency

Data released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in May 2011, shows that between 1980 and 2010, U.S. farmers increased corn production 87.5 percent while using 4 percent fewer fertilizer nutrients (see attached). Although the factors that contribute to increasing food prices and food scarcity are complex, one thing is certain – the use of fertilizer is a necessary component in the solution to further increase efficient and environmentally sensitive production of food for the world.

TFI would like to thank the Subcommittee for the opportunity to submit these comments for the hearing record. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this and other important agriculture issues. If you or your staff would like to discuss this letter or the enclosed materials, please contact TFI Vice President of Legislative Affairs, Clark Mica via email at cmica@tfi.org or telephone at (202) 515-2725.

Sincerely,

Chris Jahn
President

Enclosures