

Written by Laurie Johns  
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WEST DES MOINES, Iowa – October 4, 2010 – Iowa Farm Bureau Federation's (IFBF) grassroots farmers work hard to protect the soil and water of this state which, for generations, have provided food for their families and yours. That is why IFBF has joined with the Iowa Renewable Fuels Association (IRFA) and the Iowa Water Environment Association to file litigation challenging a rule adopted by the Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) over inappropriate voting by an out-of-state resident Commission member and the conflict of interest by another EPC member.

A lawsuit, filed October 4, 2010, raises questions about the legality of the EPC vote last December which approved a new water quality rule. "The livelihoods of farmers, rural businesses and all Iowans are adversely affected by the new antidegradation rules," said IFBF President Craig Lang. "The rule will stifle new economic development and job creation, especially in rural areas of Iowa."

"We know that the antidegradation rule will likely increase sewer and storm water rates for many Iowans, whether they live in small, rural towns or large Iowa cities," said Ted Payseur, government relations chair of the Iowa Water Environment Association. The IRFA agrees; "While Iowa is the nation's leader in renewable fuels production, this new EPC rule threatens the future of that status," said IRFA executive director Monte Shaw. "Imposing excessive costs and limitations that go above and beyond the Clean Water Act will severely hamper the ability of current biofuels producers to expand and will discourage new producers from locating in Iowa."

The lawsuit contends two EPC members had significant issues that should have prevented them from voting on the antidegradation rule. Residency was the issue for regulator Carrie LaSeur, founder and president of the environmental activist group, Plains Justice. LaSeur was already living and voting in Montana when she cast her vote on the Iowa antidegradation rule. That is a clear violation of the residency laws governing the EPC, which require members to be registered Iowa voters.

Susan Heathcote is an employee of The Iowa Environmental Council, an environmental lobbying group which pushed EPC adoption of the antidegradation rule; she had a clear conflict voting on a measure that affects her employer and her paycheck.

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The lawsuit also spotlights procedural irregularities with the adoption of the antidegradation rule. “Iowans need to believe they are represented by lawmakers who have their best interests in mind; not appointed members of a board, serving their own agendas,” said Lang.

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