



505 Fifth Ave Suite 850
Des Moines IA 50309
515.244.1194
iaenvironment.org

July 29, 2025

Administrator Lee Zeldin
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Mail Code 1101A
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460
Zeldin.Lee@epa.gov

RE: Follow-Up on Petition for Emergency Action Pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water Act

Dear Administrator Zeldin:

I am writing on behalf of petitioning organizations to request EPA respond to the petition submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on April 16, 2024, regarding nitrate contamination in Iowa's source waters. The petition, filed by local, state, and national organizations pursuant to Section 1431 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), outlines urgent public health threats from nitrate pollution in drinking water sources due to widespread agricultural pollution and insufficient state regulatory action.

The petition provides information about nitrate levels in numerous water systems in Northeast Iowa consistently approaching or exceeding EPA's maximum contaminant level, which poses a significant risk to human health—particularly to infants and vulnerable populations. Despite longstanding awareness of these issues, state efforts have failed to adequately mitigate this contamination or ensure safe drinking water protections for affected communities.

The EPA's authority under Section 1431 grants it the power—and responsibility—to intervene when inadequate state action puts public health at risk. Given the documented and ongoing nature of nitrate contamination, we urge the EPA to act without further delay to:

1. Initiate a federal investigation into Iowa's failure to adequately protect drinking water sources.
2. Use emergency authority under SDWA Section 1431 to require immediate and enforceable measures to reduce nitrate pollution.
3. Ensure that impacted communities are informed and protected, including by increasing monitoring and public notification.

We recognize and appreciate the EPA's commitment to protecting public health and the environment. Swift action in this case is essential to uphold those values. The communities and individuals affected by contaminated drinking water have waited too long for meaningful relief.

We respectfully request a timely update on the status of this petition and the agency's intended course of action. Please do not hesitate to contact me at schmidt@iaenvironment.org for any additional information or discussion.

Thank you for your continued attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

/s/ Michael Schmidt

Michael Schmidt
General Counsel
Iowa Environmental Council

On behalf of:

Allamakee County Protectors – Education Campaign
Center for Food Safety
Environmental Law & Policy Center
Environmental Working Group
Food & Water Watch
Iowa Alliance for Responsible Agriculture
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
Iowa Coldwater Conservancy
Sierra Club Iowa Chapter
Socially Responsible Agriculture Project

Cc: James Macy, Regional Administrator, EPA Region 7
Jeffery Robichaud, EPA Region 7