



Hearings Set on Changes to Soil and Water Conservation Rule

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MADISON – Four public hearings are scheduled on proposed changes to Wisconsin's soil and water conservation rule, known as ATCP 50.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection has scheduled these hearings:

Eau Claire – Monday, Jan. 9, 2-4 p.m. and 5:30-7:30 p.m., Chippewa Valley Technical College, 620 W. Clairemont Ave., Business Education Center, Room 103A

Platteville – Thursday, Jan. 19, 2-4 p.m. and 5:30-7:30 p.m., Markee Pioneer Student Center, 1 University Plaza, University North Room

Appleton – Monday, Jan. 23, 2-4 p.m. and 5:30-7:30 p.m., Fox Valley Technical College, 1825 N. Bluemound Road, Room A1701A, Entrance 16.

Madison – Thursday, Jan. 26, 2-4 p.m. and 5:30-7:30 p.m., State Agriculture Building, 2811 Agriculture Drive, Room 106

The department is proposing revisions primarily to incorporate changes to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 590 Nutrient Management Standard. Those changes, in turn, incorporated changes to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources farm runoff standards. Together, the three sets of regulations establish a framework for the state's "nonpoint source" pollution control program. The program works with counties to install and share costs of farmland conservation practices, plan for soil and water conservation and farmland preservation, oversee manure storage and local livestock operations, and train conservation professionals.

The proposed changes include new restrictions aimed at keeping manure and other nutrients away from direct conduits to groundwater, while allowing farmers to choose conservation practices that are appropriate for their operations and still protect resources.

To help compensate for the additional time or acreage farmers might need to spread nutrients under new restrictions, the cost-share rate to help farmers develop nutrient management plans would also increase from the current \$7 per acre annually to \$10. The proposed changes would also clarify that farmers might be required to meet conservation standards in some cases even if cost-sharing is not available.

The revised rule would also clarify that, whenever a nutrient management plan is required by local regulations, it would have to meet state standards.

In addition to the public hearings, comments will be accepted until Thursday, Feb. 9, via mail and email, and online. Mail comments to DATCP, ATTN Sue Porter, P.O. Box 8911, Madison, WI 53708-8911. Email comments to sue.porter@wi.gov. Comment online at https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/chr/all/cr_16_083.

Copies of the rule are available online at https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/ATCP50RuleRevision.aspx or by calling 608-224-4605.

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