



Press Release

For Immediate Release
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**NRC BIOSOLIDS STUDY CONCLUDES PART 503 RULE PROTECTS PUBLIC HEALTH
*WEF Supports Call For Continued Research***

(Alexandria, VA) – The Water Environment Federation (WEF) today commends the National Academies' National Research Council (NRC) on the completion of its 18-month study, *Biosolids Applied to Land: Advancing Standards and Practices* and supports its conclusion that there is no documented scientific evidence that EPA's 1993 Part 503 rule has failed to protect public health. Instead, the new report calls for additional scientific research to reduce persistent uncertainty about potential for adverse human health effects from exposure to land-applied biosolids and provides recommendations to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to update and strengthen the scientific credibility of biosolids standards and ensure their consistent implementation.

According to WEF Deputy Executive Director, **Dr. Albert Gray**, "WEF appreciates the work done by the NAS panel to review the risk assessment methodology and scientific basis for EPA's Part 503 biosolids standards. We are pleased that this diverse committee of experts has confirmed what public health and water quality professionals already know. Today we call on EPA to act promptly to respond to the recommendations outlined by the NRC. Leadership by EPA at the federal level, together with greater support for state regulatory programs, will help to maintain public confidence in biosolids recycling as a safe and environmentally-friendly practice."

The NRC established its recommendations based upon the need to update the scientific basis of the Part 503 rule. These recommendations ensure that the chemical and pathogen standards are supported by current scientific data and risk-assessment methods, demonstrate effective enforcement of the rule, and validate the effectiveness of biosolids management practices. The report's overarching recommendations include the use of improved risk-assessment methods to better establish standards for chemicals and pathogens; conduct a new national survey of chemicals and pathogens in sewage sludge; establish a framework for an approach to implement human health investigations; and increase the resources devoted to EPA's biosolids program.

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Biosolids refer to solid organic matter recovered from the wastewater treatment process and used especially as fertilizer. This study was requested by the EPA to evaluate the Part 503 rule to ensure the protection of public health and assure the public of the safety of regulated biosolids land application. With the recognition of NRC's recommendations by the EPA, Gray concludes that, "the report reassures the public that the Part 503 rule has been, and is, protective of public health and we would expect that further study will reinforce confidence in the safety of land applied biosolids".

To obtain additional information on biosolids please visit <http://www.wef.org/> to view the *Guide to Understanding Biosolids*, a publication developed by WEF and AMSA.

Founded in 1928, the **Water Environment Federation (WEF)** is a not-for-profit technical and educational organization with members from varied disciplines who work toward the WEF vision of preservation and enhancement of the global water environment. The WEF network includes more than 100,000 water quality professionals from 77 Member Associations in 31 countries.