**GRASSROOTS AMBASSADOR TALKING POINTS – MARCH 2019**

**WOTUS** – Since the Clean Water Rule (commonly known as “WOTUS”) was first proposed by the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers in 2014, GCSAA has repeatedly argued that its sweeping scope over rivers, streams, wetlands, and ditches would result in an expensive, unpredictable, and unnecessary permitting process for golf courses across the country. The Trump Administration proposed on February 14, 2019 a replacement rule that:

* **Limits tributaries to naturally occurring surface water channels that contribute perennial or intermittent flow during the year**. To qualify as a tributary, a river or stream must have flow that occurs regularly during the course of a typical year and not in response to a storm or other precipitation event. Therefore, ephemeral waters are not included. Further, the new rule eliminates the bed, bank and OHWM concepts that would have otherwise included many ditches under federal jurisdiction.
* **Limits adjacent waters to those wetlands that either touch or have a direct hydrological surface connection to a larger body of water covered by the Clean Water Act**. So, wetlands separated by a physical barrier and lack a direct connection to navigable waters, lakes or ponds are not included. The bordering, contiguous, and neighboring concepts found in the 2015 WOTUS rule are removed.

***GCSAA will lead the golf industry’s response to this rule and provide comments that ensure that decision-makers consider its impact on golf. GCSAA will continue to support water conservation and water quality protection that is based on sound science and credible data and promote the values of professionally managed landscapes.***

**NPDES PERMITTING** – GCSAA supports passage of **H.R. 890, the “Reducing EPA Duplication to Advance Pesticide Enforcement Act (REDTAPE Act),”** sponsored by Congressman Bob Gibbs (R-OH-7), which would negate the need for federal Clean Water Act (CWA) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits for chemical spraying activities made in accordance with the Federal, Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).

* **Pesticides are already highly regulated under FIFRA.** Products used for aquatic plant management are already subjected to an intensive approval process by the EPA before they can be registered. FIFRA already requires that the EPA ensure that pesticides cause ‘no unreasonable adverse effect’ to humans or the environment – including water quality and aquatic species - and that use labels are crafted to protect these resources. The label is the law: *users who do not follow the pesticide label are in violation of federal law even without a water permit.*
* **Litigation forced EPA to permit many types of pesticide applications under the CWA despite the fact that pesticides are strictly regulated under FIFRA.** Activist lawsuits against the EPA, as well as agricultural and non-farm users, have compelled Congress to seek to clarify that the CWA was not intended to permit pesticide applications.

**H-2B VISA PROGRAM** – The H-2B visa program is critical to the $84 Billion U.S. Golf Industry. According to Department of Labor statistics, in 2006, golf facilities (including resorts) asked for approximately 26,000 H-2B visa workers – of that number over 7,700 were for golf course maintenance positions.

* The program's **congressionally mandated cap of 66,000** (33,000 for each half of the fiscal year) has historically been inadequate to meet the seasonal needs of small businesses such as golf courses.
* GCSAA supports Congress reintroducing legislation similar to H.R. 2004, the SEASON Act and S. 792, the Save Our Small and Seasonal Businesses Act, both from 2017, which would provide **long term cap relief** by making the H-2B Returning Worker Exemption permanent and streamline and expedite processing of H-2B applications.

***By filling temporary jobs, H-2B workers not only keep businesses open, they contribute to the creation of year-round jobs for American workers. Studies show that every H-2B position supports 4.6 American jobs.***