Governing Nutrient Pollution Beyond Farmers

**Award Year:**
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**Associated Program:**
[Workshop Program](https://www.sesync.org/opportunities/research-workshops/workshop-program)

Nutrient pollution is one of the most important environmental issues of our time, driven by the over-supply of fertilizer and manure to agricultural land. Most policies focus on changing farmer behavior, which is extremely difficult and largely ineffective, particularly in the US. This leads to the central and novel question that underpins this workshop: how to design a governance system focused on the agri-food chain beyond the farm (from fertilizer producers to wastewater treatment companies) that can change the incentives driving farm-level nutrient use. In short, how to reduce agricultural nutrient pollution without regulating farmers? Answering this question requires an interdisciplinary approach, synthesizing data from multiple fields that seldom converse (from rural sociology to economics, from law to ecology). It requires a multifaceted team of experts to design a new governance system for addressing agricultural nutrient pollution that goes beyond traditional approaches, which is the central goal of this workshop. This governance system would comprise a series of public and private regulatory strategies targeting non-farm actors and informed by the socioeconomic context in which farmers make decisions, as well as an evaluation framework to analyze the ex-ante environmental and socioeconomic impacts. Final products would include a set of public and private policy templates freely available to policymakers, NGOs, and citizen groups that would be the basis for follow-up workshops in specific jurisdictions, in addition to academic publication(s) introducing the new governance and evaluation system.

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**Links**
[1] [https://www.sesync.org/opportunities/research-workshops/workshop-program](https://www.sesync.org/opportunities/research-workshops/workshop-program)