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Budget Proposals Undermine Environmental Protection Nationwide

New YouTube Video: “Our values, our environment, our future”

A national network of state level environmental organizations, including the Iowa Environmental Council, has produced a new, YouTube video: “[Our values, our environment, our future](#),” to draw attention to the impact of current and proposed state and federal budget cuts on environmental safeguards across the nation.

Melissa Gavin, Executive Director of the State Environmental Leadership Program, explains: “Basic protections for air and water quality are on the chopping block in states throughout the country. At the same time, EPA’s budget has also been under attack. People need to know that part of what is getting slashed is our capacity to enforce laws that protect health and quality of life—even funds that help us maintain sewage treatment and drinking water purification plants.”

Executive director of the [Iowa Environmental Council](#), Marian Riggs Gelb, said, “States have already cut back on staff needed to provide important services. Due to the lack of state environmental funding in Iowa, we’ve stopped notifying communities when air pollution levels are such that people with asthma and the elderly should stay indoors. In 2009 we had to ask the federal EPA to step in to do environmental inspections of animal feeding operations. Short-sighted budget decisions like these just shift the problems and costs and are irresponsible.”

“In Iowa we’ve cut back funding on watershed management, flood mitigation strategy and soil conservation programs. Despite the fact that Eastern Iowa communities along the Mississippi and Western Iowa communities along the Missouri are facing record flooding this year—right on

the heels of the 2008 and 2010 floods—all of these and other environmental protection programs are facing cuts. This is the time to expand such programs, not cut them back,” said Riggs Gelb.

The video makes the case for a balanced approach—considering revenue options as well as cuts—to grapple with budgets. It asserts that that budget caps are not a sound strategy; they tie our hands even if we need to respond to public needs, including emergencies and environmental disasters. It also argues that if we are going to look at cuts, all spending should be on the table, including military spending and corporate subsidies, and it points out that programs that protect our health, safety and natural resources should not have to carry the lion’s share of cuts.

The video includes a list of budget actions in four highlighted states that illustrate the breadth of cuts for environmental protection, energy conservation, public transportation and related areas. It was produced by the [State Environmental Leadership Program](#), a staff-supported network of independent environmental activist organizations that focus on state level policy to preserve, protect and enhance the natural and human environment, and the health and quality of life for all people. SELP has affiliated member organizations in 35 of the 50 states.

Seven- and three-minute versions of the video are available for viewing at the following urls:

[Our values, our environment, our future](#) – 7 minutes

[Our Values, our environment, our future](#) – 3 minutes

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