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Iowa Environmental Council Asks Legislators to Build on Economic Benefits of Clean Air, Water

Des Moines – Advocates for clean water and air, clean renewable energy and energy efficiency filled the Statehouse first-floor rotunda today to ask lawmakers to boost Iowa’s economy and job growth by improving environmental conditions in the state.

At a morning press conference Marian Riggs Gelb, executive director for the Iowa Environmental Council, a non-profit, member-driven environmental policy organization, told lawmakers that “livable cities, green industries, energy efficient buildings, fishable lakes, attractive parks, and good air quality attract new residents and businesses to Iowa and stimulate our economy. Adversely, air pollution that causes counties in Iowa to violate air quality standards, as continues to occur in Eastern Iowa, impedes business and population growth alike.”

“What business will locate to Iowa, if current businesses consume all available clean air space? What young family will stay or move to Iowa, if they have to watch the news to know when it’s safe to let their children go outside to play? What is Iowa doing to attract young farmers and preserve our precious topsoil?” asked Gelb.

She then called for legislators to ...

- Enact a statewide ban on burning municipal waste.
- Work in conjunction with the Rebuild Iowa Office to adopt Smart Growth Planning Principles for the state.
- Implement clean transportation policies. These could include an expansion of passenger transit and rail service across Iowa, reducing the amount of miles that cars drive, and increasing availability of low carbon content fuels.
- Create more financing options for renewable energy and energy efficiency, such as Property Assessed Clean Energy Financing (PACE), which can help reduce financial barriers to energy improvements, so that buildings can become more efficient and use more renewable energy technology. PACE financing allows residents and businesses to

access low interest financing for energy improvements. The financing mechanism can stay with the property and be repaid for a period of time, often with energy savings created by the improvement.

- Adopt recommendations of the Water Resource Coordinating Council (WRCC) to mitigate flood risks and environmental destruction from floods, including expanding flood protection to what is commonly known as the 500-year flood zone. This expands the amount of land where new development and reconstruction of substantially damaged buildings would be restricted.
- Fully fund and protect current investments in Iowa's renewable energy technologies, such as wind and solar. This includes the renewable energy production tax credits in Iowa Code sections 476B and 476C and the appropriation to the Iowa Power Fund.

Iowa Environmental Council member organizations and partners represented at the Statehouse today included 1000 Friends of Iowa; American Institute of Architects—Iowa Chapter; Center for Energy and Environmental Education; Environment Iowa; Environmental Law and Policy Center; Iowa Farmers Union; Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation; Iowa Policy Project; Iowa Recycling Association; Iowa Renewable Energy Association; Iowa Rivers Revival; Raccoon River Watershed Association; Trees Forever; University Hygienic Lab; and Women, Food and Agriculture Network.

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About the Iowa Environmental Council

The Iowa Environmental Council actively works in public policy to provide a safe, healthy environment for all Iowans. The Council focuses on public education and coalition building to give Iowans a voice on issues that affect their quality of life and to protect Iowa's natural resources for current and future generations. For more information contact the Iowa Environmental Council visit www.iaenvironment.org.

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