

ENVIRONMENTAL RISK FACTORS AND IOWA'S CANCER CRISIS

HOW TO CONNECT WITH CANDIDATES AND ELECTED OFFICIALS AT EVENTS OR IN CONVERSATION

Events featuring candidates and elected officials (town halls, community forums, and meet-and-greets) are great opportunities to ask leaders where they stand on issues that matter to you. When candidates hear the same concerns from many voters, they are more likely to pay attention. You can also invite a candidate to coffee or schedule a phone call. Or you might run into a candidate at the grocery store or county fair!

Candidates want to hear from the people they hope to represent. By showing up, asking thoughtful questions, and sharing your personal perspective, you help ensure that the issues affecting your community are part of the public conversation. Every respectful conversation helps build awareness and accountability.

Step 1: Find an Event

- Check candidates' websites, social media pages, or campaign email newsletters.
- Follow your local newspaper community calendar.
- Watch for announcements from your local chamber of commerce, library, political parties.

Step 2: Prepare Before You Go

- Take a few minutes to research what the candidate or elected official has already said about the issue. For example, have they talked about water quality, pollution, and cancer?
- Prepare your question. Write your own question, or use one of these examples.
 - **What would you do to make sure that Iowa water is clean and safe?**
 - **What do you think needs to be done to reduce the pollution in Iowa's water that has been linked to our cancer crisis?**
 - **Would you support legislation that would require basic conservation practices on farmland in Iowa?**
 - **If elected, would you vote to fully fund the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund (IWILL) that Iowa voters approved in 2010?**
 - **How would you address problems with polluted water in rural Iowa, not just focusing on Des Moines?**

Step 3: Ask Your Question

- Usually during a candidate event, there is time set aside for audience questions. You can also approach a candidate after the event to ask your question.
- Keep your question brief (30 seconds or less).
- Be respectful and nonpartisan. The goal is to raise the issue and encourage a meaningful response, not argue or create conflict.

Step 4: Stay Engaged After the Event

If there is an opportunity to speak with candidates or elected officials after the event:

- Introduce yourself with your name and the city and county you live in.
- Thank them for attending.
- Briefly share why water quality, environmental pollution, and cancer matters to you.
- Ask if they would be willing to learn more or meet again in the future to continue the conversation.
- If available, offer a fact sheet or direct the candidate to learn more.
- Write them a brief thank-you email and reiterate what you shared at the event.
- Tell friends and neighbors what you learned or post a respectful summary on social media.
- Stay in touch with the campaign: Follow social media accounts, sign up for emails, and attend future events to continue raising the issue.



Iowa
Environmental
Council