

ENVIRONMENTAL RISK FACTORS AND IOWA'S CANCER CRISIS

HOW TO SHARE YOUR STORY

Sharing your story is one of the most powerful ways to advocate for change. Facts and data are essential, but personal stories help bring those facts to life. When candidates and elected officials hear directly from Iowans whose lives have been affected by cancer, polluted water, or environmental health concerns, they gain a deeper understanding of why these issues matter to the communities they serve. Your experience can help decision-makers see the real-world impacts of policies and inspire them to prioritize solutions that protect clean water, reduce pollution, and improve public health. Whether you have experienced cancer yourself, cared for a loved one, or worried about the safety of your water, air, and soil, your voice adds an important perspective that statistics alone cannot provide.

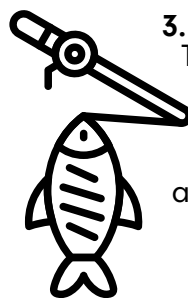
How to Develop and Deliver Your Story

 **1. The Hook: Establish Relevance**
The Hook introduces who you are and why you matter, connecting personally to the candidate and the issue. State WHO you are and WHERE you are from. If you live in the candidate's or elected official's district, be sure to mention that.

EXAMPLE: I'm Jane Smith, and I live in Wapello County, in your district.

 **2. The Line: Explain the Issue**
The Line clarifies what is happening in your life and your community and why it matters, using your personal story and relevant facts or statistics.

EXAMPLE: My husband was diagnosed with colorectal cancer in 2020, and it was devastating for our family. He had to take a leave of absence from his job, and it put a strain on our finances. We had to drive two hours for his treatments. Iowa has the second-highest cancer rates in the country, and we are one of the only states where cancer is increasing.



3. The Sinker: Make the Ask

The Sinker is the clear and specific action you want the candidate or elected official to take. Keep it short and make sure it is related to your story and the issue.

EXAMPLES:

- What will you do to address the issue of rising cancer rates in Iowa?
- 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?
- How will you make sure Iowa is enforcing our existing environmental laws?

Follow Up and Stay Engaged

Stay in touch with the candidate or elected official. Sign up to receive their email newsletters and follow them on social media. Write them a brief thank-you email and reiterate what you shared in your story. Tell friends and neighbors what you learned in your conversation with your candidate or elected official.



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