

IEC Water Program Key Issues

Fund The Trust -- Iowa's Natural Resources & Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund

- 54% of Iowa's assessed waters fail to meet water quality standards (or are "impaired"). An additional 20% of our assessed waters are "potentially impaired."
- One of Iowa's biggest water quality challenges -- nutrient pollution -- is getting worse:
 - Recent studies show that Iowa's nitrate loads have increased 47% from 2003-2016 (based on 5 year running averages).
- SF 512 is simply not adequate to address Iowa's water quality problems:
 - Annual costs of implementing the state's nutrient reduction strategy could be up to \$1 billion per year -- SF 512 would provide only \$141 million for water quality infrastructure projects.
- Funding the Trust is necessary to provide a long-term, dedicated funding source to help address Iowa's water quality challenges:
 - Estimated revenue from the Trust is \$187.5 million per year.
 - Up to 2/3 of total revenue would be available for voluntary conservation projects.
 - 69% of Iowa voters support a 3/8 cent sales tax increase to fund the Trust.

Restore Funding for the Department of Natural Resources

- DNR is the entity tasked with establishing Iowa's water quality standards, assessing our waters to ensure those standards are being met, prioritizing our waters based on severity of pollution/need, identifying responsibility for pollution impairments, and developing water quality improvement plans to restore our waters back to health.
 - Over the past decade, DNR's funding has been cut in half.
- Funding for DNR must be restored to ensure limited public resources are triaged to the waters/watersheds that need them most.

SSB 1123 - Incentivize Conservation Practices that Cut Water Pollution & Protect Soil Health – FOR

- Cover crops improve soil health, help keep soil in place, and help improve water quality by cutting agricultural pollution – Iowa's largest source of nitrogen & phosphorus pollution.
 - Some studies estimate cover crops can reduce the amount of nitrogen leaving a field by a median value of 48%)
- Iowa's Nutrient Reduction Strategy (NRS) calls for the implementation of cover crops, but Iowa currently has only 5-7% of the total amount of cover crop acres needed to reach NRS goals.
- SSB 1123 would incentivize cover crop adoption by establishing a property tax exemption for ag land planted with cover crops.

SF 548 – Relating to the acquisition, donation, or sale of property for specified purposes – AGAINST

- Would prohibit the use of State Revolving Fund (SRF) dollars to purchase land for water quality protection and transfer to public entities, such as cities, county conservation boards, or state wildlife management areas.
- The land purchased with SRF dollars is sold by willing landowners that approach the buyer of their own volition.
- The land purchased through SRF is not well suited for agricultural production but is ideal for water quality protection, such as wetlands and floodplains.
- Iowa needs all the tools in its toolkit to improve water quality.

****This bill passed the Senate 32-17 with a small amendment. We will keep you informed of its movement in the House of Representatives* ***