



Iowa Environmental Council

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WHO IS THE IOWA ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL?

For more than 25 years, the Iowa Environmental Council (IEC) has been a trusted voice on policy to address the pressing environmental and conservation issues facing Iowans.

We envision a state that is a leader in clean water, clean energy, and environmental justice and in creating resilient communities that embody Iowans' shared values of respect for all people and our natural resources.

Our areas of expertise are water, land, and energy policy. We support policies that will benefit all Iowans, especially those who have historically been left behind.



IEC takes community leaders on a farm tour in Polk County

IEC'S 2023 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Expand the tools Iowa counties can use to mitigate flood damage by adding natural infrastructure options, such as floodplain reconnection and wetland restoration.

Amend Section 331.441, subsection 2, paragraph b, subparagraph (20) to include "reconnection of floodplains, wetland and oxbow lake restoration" as part of the definition of "essential county purpose" related to protection of property from floodwaters.

Fund the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund.

The Trust Fund would provide approximately \$200 million annually to improve water quality and protect Iowa's landscape.

Expand the powers of Soil and Water Conservation Districts to include soil erosion control, watershed protection or improvement, water resources restoration, flood prevention or control, and water quality protection projects and operations.

Grow Iowa's clean energy leadership with policies that allow continued investment in wind, solar, and transmission such as reasonable siting rules, utility net metering programs, and access to community solar.

Develop programs and policies that help people invest in cleaner indoor technologies that rely on stable electricity prices that result in safer and more affordable homes for Iowans.

Create utility rates and policies that are fair for everyone, help families lower their energy bills by using energy more efficiently, and ensure that ratepayers benefit from utility investments in clean energy.

PRIORITY ISSUES

GROW IOWA'S CLEAN ENERGY LEADERSHIP



Wind and solar benefit Iowa's economy. By 2025, wind and solar are expected to provide \$86.2 million in benefits to Iowa farmers and landowners and support more than 12,000 jobs annually. In 2021 alone, wind energy provided \$99.6 million in local and state tax revenues, reducing the burden on other taxpayers and supporting community investments in roads, bridges, and schools.¹ Small-scale solar helps individuals, businesses, and farmers cut energy costs and have more control over their own operations. IEC looks forward to working with the legislature to support a clean energy system that benefits all Iowans.

MAKE IOWA HOMES AFFORDABLE AND SAFE



As energy prices for gas and heating continue to rise, finding more ways to use clean electricity in homes and businesses can reduce costs and provide greater economic stability for hardworking Iowans. Using electricity indoors instead of burning fuel also eliminates indoor air pollution that can make kids, the elderly, and other vulnerable people sick. Stable energy prices plus cleaner air is a win-win for Iowans.

ENSURE ALL IOWANS BENEFIT FROM CLEAN ENERGY



As our energy system changes, all Iowans should have access to fair utility rates and clean energy at a reasonable cost. Right now, rural and low-income Iowans are paying more than they can afford for energy, with households below 50% of poverty paying 30% of their income for home energy.² Utility and state-run programs can help people weatherize buildings to reduce energy costs. Up-to-date building codes make new buildings affordable for the long-term. Utility rates can balance the interests of the utility and customers, incentivize investments in lower-cost energy sources, and ensure benefits get passed along to customers.

ENSURE AFFORDABLE, CLEAN WATER FOR ALL IOWANS



Iowa needs clean, safe water for a strong economy. Pollution limits opportunities for boating, fishing, and swimming at Iowa's lakes and beaches, threatening tourism dollars that flow into local communities throughout our state. Iowans continue to face increasing costs to treat drinking water. Iowa needs to adopt practical policies that will systematically and strategically deploy conservation practices to prevent pollution, lower the financial burden of water clean-up for Iowans, and support a strong economy.

PRIORITIZE A RESILIENT LANDSCAPE



Extreme weather events, driven by changing climate patterns, are increasingly threatening Iowa's farms, communities, economy, and public health. Iowa ranks 4th in the nation for states most impacted by natural disasters.³ The Governor declared 11 weather-related disasters in 2021 and 9 through the fall of 2022. Diversifying land use and investing in natural infrastructure on public and private lands will protect Iowan lives and property, boost economic stability and development opportunities, and increase our ability to weather and recover from natural disasters.

¹ Iowa Conservative Energy Forum 2022 Report *Iowa, a Renewable Energy Juggernaut: Wind and Solar Economic Impacts 1992-2025*.

² 2021 Home Energy Affordability Gap Analysis. Fisher, Sheehan & Colton, Iowa data sheet, http://www.homeenergyaffordabilitygap.com/03a_affordabilityData.html

³ <https://wallethub.com/edu/states-most-impacted-by-natural-disasters/111223>

