



## **State denies IEC & ELPC petition to limit nutrient pollution**

Iowa's recreational lakes are a vital economic resource for the state. According to a [recent report on lake restoration](#) by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, visits to Iowa lakes generate more than \$1 billion in annual spending and six in 10 Iowans visit Iowa lakes multiple times in a year.

Protecting these lakes from nutrient pollution is critically important, the Iowa Environmental Council (IEC) and the Environmental Law & Policy Center (ELPC) stated Tuesday before the Environmental Protection Commission (EPC). Nutrient pollution, which includes nitrogen and phosphorus, contributes to the growth of harmful algae blooms that reduce lake water clarity and drive patches of foul-smelling green algae on the water's surface that essentially choke Iowa's lakes.

These harmful algae blooms can also release toxins like microcystin, which threaten human and animal health. The discovery of microcystin toxin has forced the DNR to issue an increasing number of beach warnings over the last decade, keeping people out of recreational lakes and harming local economies that receive significant revenue from lake tourism.



IEC and ELPC petitioned the state in November to establish numeric limits for nutrient pollutants, maintaining that such limits are necessary to protect the safe use of Iowa's recreational lakes and are therefore required by the federal Clean Water Act.

"Just like we need numeric speed limits to protect Iowa roads and driver safety, we need to establish numeric limits on the amount of nutrient pollution that Iowa lakes can withstand while still supporting their safe recreational use," said Cindy Lane, Water Program Director at the Iowa Environmental Council. "These limits are vital for effectively monitoring our lakes, determining which lakes are impaired by nutrients, and triaging our limited public resources to restore lakes that are most critical."

Steve Roe agrees. As a longtime soil and water commissioner, homeowner near Lake Panorama, and business owner actively engaged in the economic development of his community, Roe is concerned about diminished lake water quality leading to declines in property values and threatening the economic vitality of his community.

"Within my lifetime, I have watched as our lakes begin to lose the fight against nutrient pollution," says Roe. "The water clarity is greatly reduced and with the increase in algae, we're losing the boaters, paddlers, fishermen, swimmers, and beachgoers to other activities, other lakes, and even other states with cleaner water. I want clean water for my grandchildren. We can do better. It's time to do better."

Following presentations, the EPC vote unanimously to deny the petition. [Read the full story](#) in the IEC newsroom.

Help us continue our work to call for clean water in Iowa - make a donation in any amount today. Every gift makes it possible for us to convene stakeholders, focus on the science, and make the case for policy changes. Please give today - thank you!



## Mark Your Calendar for Member and Partner Events

Environmental Lobby Day, March 21, Des Moines

Eyewitness to Climate Change - Famed Arctic Explorer in Fairfield, February 24, Fairfield

11th Annual Dubuque Area Watershed Symposium, February 27, Dubuque

Prairie Preview: UI Wild: Connecting Iowans with the Wile for a Generation, March 5, Iowa City

Green Expo, April 25, Clear Lake



## Iowa Water News

*The Gazette* - Iowa Commission won't set limits on lake pollution

*Associated Press* - Plan to fight Lake Erie's algae would force changes on farms

*Iowa Environmental Focus* - CGRER looks forward: Co-director Jerry Schnoor talks water quality in Iowa

*Iowa City Press Citizen* - Slowing down water: Long term solution to flash floods

*Iowa DNR* - The DNR is seeking your input on how you use your streams and rivers for recreation - take an online survey



## **Iowa Energy News**

*IEC and ELPC* react to recent IUB approval of MidAmerican energy efficiency plan

*Energy News Network* - Iowa approved slimmed-down efficiency plan for state's largest utility

*Bleeding Heartland* - New bill is clear attempt to "monopolize the sun in Iowa"

*New IEC Report*: science doesn't support wind turbine sound health claims

*Survey of Iowa energy efficiency contractors* reveal negative business outlook, job cuts due to 2018 utility legislation

*YaleEnvironment360* - Planting 1.2 trillion trees could cancel out a decade of CO2 emissions, scientists find

*Axios.com* - Earth's five warmest years on record have occurred since 2014

*The Gazette* - Iowa businesses are leading the climate fight



## IEC ACTION ALERT

The DNR is seeking public comments to a rulemaking to update stream use designations. The quality of these waterbodies is at risk. Learn more and submit your comments by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, February 22.

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