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# Legislative News Bulletin

From the Iowa Environmental Council

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## Week 9 Recap

Last week was dominated by floor action following the first funnel. The House and Senate debated and passed dozens of bills but subcommittee and committee meetings were rare.

Active bills will now advance to their respective chamber floors for debate and to the opposite chamber for review. This week's updated [bill tracker](#) includes both active, unaffected, and dead bills. Note that many bills will have new numbers following the funnel and we will highlight this information when necessary.



## Looking Ahead

There will be more subcommittee and committee meetings to allow the chambers to move the bills forward. Certain bills passed from one chamber will need passage from the other chamber's appropriate committee to stay active through the next funnel deadline on April 5.

Many of the bills IEC was following did not make it out of committee before the March 8 funnel deadline. These bills will be active for next year and can be picked up on the first day of the 2020 session. Our work does not stop when session ends. IEC will be working to build coalitions, gain interest and support throughout the year. This work is [made possible through your support](#).

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### Energy Program Activity

Only [ten of the thirty-five bills IEC was registered on or monitoring](#) survived the first funnel. Active bills include topics like electric vehicles, utility service costs disclosures for renters, and how solar customers are credited for their energy production.

The sunshine tax bills – [SF 583](#) (formerly SSB 1201) and [HF 669](#) (formerly HSB 185) – remain clear concerns. Last week SF 583 was placed on the Senate debate calendar but was not brought up for debate. The earlier amendment adopted by the Senate Commerce Committee exempts the largest renewable energy generators from the new charges and rates while continuing to harm most customer-owned solar. This is not fair to Iowa businesses, agriculture producers, communities, and individuals that want to invest in their own solar.

These bills target the very consumers who provide high-value energy to utilities when needed. They receive credit for that energy when prices are low and energy is cheap to provide. It is not fair to insist that customers with distributed generation pay for "grid costs" because utilities are choosing to ignore the true value of the energy these customers provide. We will continue to keep you informed on the movement of SF 583 and HF 669. [Tell your legislators today to oppose SF 583 and HF 669!](#)

We will continue to follow these issues and will keep you informed of opportunities to speak out and take action on bills undermining clean energy in Iowa.



## Water Program Activity

The first funnel resulted in only [fifteen bills surviving out of the sixty bills IEC was registered on or monitoring](#). The active bills cover a range of topics including beverage redemption, private fishing and hunting, and stream mitigation.

IEC is supporting [HF 735](#) (formerly HF 571). This bill allows Soil Conservation Districts to carry out additional duties related to water quality protection and the improvement of water quality under the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy.

[HF 677](#) (DNR Omnibus) and [HF 512](#) (In Lieu Fee Program) are two target pieces of legislation meant to update the state's water plan. HF 677 has some amendments pending but is eligible for floor debate. HF 512 is in the Ways & Means Committee and will proceed following the committee's vote.

IEC remains opposed to [SF 548](#), the successor to SSB 1221, which restricts acquisition of public lands. This bill removes options for non-point source water protection and hinders conservation efforts. We understand SF 548 will likely pass when it goes to the full Senate. Our best opportunity to stop this bill will come when it is considered by the House. We will alert you when action is necessary - stand by!

We will continue to follow these issues and will keep you informed of opportunities to speak out and take action on bills undermining water quality and our precious natural resources.

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## IEC Goes to Washington

Water Policy Specialist Alicia Vasto traveled to sunny Washington, D.C. to meet with Iowa legislative staff as part of the Mississippi River Network Fly-In on March 11 and 12. IEC is a member of the Mississippi River Network (MRN), a coalition of 57 organizations throughout the ten-state Mississippi River region that works to protect the river and the people that live and work here.

Alicia talked with legislative staff for Senators Ernst and Grassley, and Representatives Axne, Finkenauer, and Loeb sack. Alicia and fellow MRN members shared federal level priorities including fully funding Farm Bill conservation programs, expanding natural infrastructure to mitigate flooding and federal support for combatting nutrient pollution. Information was provided to legislators about the Gulf Hypoxia Action Plan and the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy. We hope to see more support from the federal level to improve water quality in Iowa and reduce our contribution to Gulf hypoxia.



*Alicia Vasto, IEC Water Policy Specialist, outside of Rep. Loeb sack's Washington, D.C. office last week.*

