

LEGISLATIVE TALKING POINTS

2016 Iowa Conservation Partnership Day

* **INTRODUCE YOURSELF AS A COMMISSIONER.**

I'm _____, a Commissioner from _____ County Soil and Water Conservation District. One of 500 elected Commissioners from Iowa's 100 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, I am here to discuss the funding needed for soil and water conservation.

* A **PERSONAL STORY** about how additional funding will help serve your shared constituents has the most impact!

* A few reasons **SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION IS SO VITAL**. Healthy soil is necessary to allow for continued agriculture production in Iowa. Iowa's farmers will play a significant role in producing the 70% increase in food needed to feed the world's population by 2050. Because it takes 500 years for 1" of topsoil to form, conserving Iowa's soil, which is some of the best in the world, is vital. In addition to food, crops producing ethanol decreases our nation's dependence on foreign oil. Agriculture production is essential to Iowa's economy because the industry employs many Iowans. Clean water is important to Iowa as well, for drinking and recreation. Clean water and natural areas for wildlife are valuable to Iowans and important for Iowa's tourism industry. Also, what we do in Iowa impacts our downstream neighbors. Funding is needed to keep conservation from becoming an unfunded federal mandate.

* \$7.5 million in the **SOIL CONSERVATION ACCOUNT** would staff offices to previous levels. Districts are currently trying to deliver new programs with nearly half the staff they had in the past.

* \$30 million for the **WATER QUALITY INITIATIVE/NUTRIENT REDUCATION STRATEGY** will accelerate efforts to improve water quality in Iowa and downstream.

* \$10 million for **IOWA FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM/COST SHARE** would fund nearly 45% of the waiting list of practices ready to begin providing environmental and agricultural benefits upon installation. There is currently an \$18 million backlog.

* \$1.1 million for **URBAN CONSERVATION** would assist urban residents with their flooding and water quality concerns.

* \$2.7 million for the **WATERSHED PROTECTION FUND** would support natural resource conservation projects developed and implemented by stakeholders vested in the local area. These local projects have been nearly cut in half with interest exceeding available funds every year showing stakeholders are still in need.

* \$2.5 million for **CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM** would eliminate the waiting list of landowners ready to install these highly effective, pollution removal practices.

* \$2 million for the **DISTRICT INITIATIVE/CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM** would be matched with federal monies, multiplying the impact these funds have on soil conservation and clean water.

* \$4.6 million would close 8 **AGRICULTURAL DRAINAGE WELLS** which are conduits for contaminants to directly enter Iowan's drinking waters. 18 registered wells would remain.

* \$650,000 for **INTEGRATED FARM AND LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT** would continue to generate the interest among farmers necessary to reduce soil and nutrient losses for continued agriculture and clean water in Iowa. The program facilitates farmers to exchange ideas and learn from one another and has proven successes of increased conservation adoption. Federal funding for this program will cease after this year so state support is needed now more than ever.

* \$600,000 for **LOESS HILL/HUNGRY CANYONS/ SOUTHERN IOWA DEVELOPMENT & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY** would allow for needed management of the unique, highly erodible soils of the region, threatening farmland and infrastructure.

* Don't forget about **IOWA'S WATER AND LAND LEGACY (IWILL)**! In 2010, 63% of Iowans voted in favor of creating a fund dedicated to Iowa's natural resources. Polling currently being conducted shows Iowans are still in favor of putting the fund in place to provide consistent and reliable funding for conservation! Also, fully funding **REAP** at \$20 million supports conservation in Iowa.

* **THANK YOUR LEGISLATOR** for their time and support.

* **CALL THEM TO ACTION** and ask them to please give conservation funding the increase needed this year to ensure continued agriculture production and clean water in Iowa.