



Legislative Proposals for 2017

- 1. Crep/Wetlands Funding** – The IDDA supports an increased state appropriation for the Crep/Wetlands program. Every dollar appropriated by the state is able to leverage four federal dollars. The current state appropriation level is \$1 million. With increasing land prices across the state, CREP appropriated dollars do not go as far. The program currently has a multi-year waiting list of interested landowners. An increased state appropriation would allow increased construction of nitrate removal wetlands providing increased protection for Iowa’s water. The program used to be funded at \$1.5 million annually but several years ago, that amount was cut to \$1 million. IDDA supports restoring the funding to at least \$1.5 million annually.
- 2. Ag Drainage Well Closure** – There are currently about 18 Ag drainage wells in active use – acting as direct chemical pipelines into drinking water supplies. These wells are located in Floyd, Grundy, Butler and Humboldt counties. IDALS estimates that it would cost \$7.5 million to close the remaining wells. Secretary Northey has requested an annual appropriation of \$1.875 million - similar to the funding level for this fiscal year. IDDA supports this request
- 3. State Water Quality Initiative** – IDDA has supported the State Water Quality Initiative, which is a voluntary farmer/landowner approach to improving the state’s water quality. Under the water quality initiative, cost share funds are provided to landowners to install and implement various conservation practices. In the current fiscal year, \$9.6 million was appropriated by the legislature. IDDA supports funding of at least that amount for the upcoming fiscal year.
- 4. Tax Credit for Conservation Practices** – In the 2015 legislature, consideration was given to legislation that would provide landowners with a state income tax credit for the installation of conservation practices on their land. Qualified practices would include bioreactors, saturated buffers, prairie strips, grass waterways, areas of permanent vegetation, areas devoted to trees and wetlands. Although the legislation was not successful, it is anticipated that legislation will again be offered in 2017. IDDA believes that an income tax credit could be one of many tools made available to farmers/landowners to encourage conservation practices and supports this concept.
- 5. Water Quality Funding**– If Iowa is going to make strides in improving water quality, a significant investment of public dollars is needed. In the state Nutrient Reduction Strategy, it is estimated that an initial investment of between \$1.2 and \$4 billion (depending on practices installed) is needed to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus impacts by the 45% called for in the strategy. Additionally, annual costs to maintain this investment would be between \$77 million and \$1.2 billion. IDDA believes that the state must make substantial, consistent and sustainable investments into water quality and conservation practices. One example would be the Iowa Water Land Legacy fund, created in the constitution, would use the next 3/8ths of cent sales tax increase to fund the practices outlined in the IWLL. This would generate about \$180 million annually. There will be other funding mechanisms considered by the legislature. IDDA supports the creation of significant, consistent long term funding resources for water quality.