



Fall Report

Photo: David Mahncke/Bigstock

Thousands of Iowans take a stand for rivers

Campaign to protect rivers gains momentum

This summer, Environment Iowa staff fanned out across the state and talked to Iowans from all walks of life about the need to protect our rivers from agricultural pollution.

This face-to-face outreach helped mobilize broad grassroots support for our plan to clean up Iowa's rivers and limit dangerous runoff pollution from Big Ag, with thousands of citizens joining our campaign and signing petitions calling on the Legislature to act.

470 waterways too polluted

There are 470 rivers and streams across the state that are too polluted for fishing, swimming or other use. And runoff pollution from Big Ag—chemical fertilizer, animal manure and other substances that don't belong in our waterways—shares much of the blame.

In addition to fouling our rivers, recent record levels of nitrate pollution—attributable to runoff from Big Ag—pose a major threat to clean drinking water for Iowans that rely on residential wells.

That's why we're urging the Legislature to adopt our smart three-point plan to cut runoff pollution and protect the rivers we love. The plan calls for strong, mandatory standards for runoff pollution from industrial agriculture; a "polluter pays principle," so that Big Ag will have to pay for polluting our rivers; and an enforceable plan for cleaning up our rivers, with a timetable and measurable goals.



Photo: John Langholz

▲ Iowa's rivers should be natural treasures, but runoff pollution from industrial agriculture is fouling our waterways.

Senators, others on board

On July 2, Environment Iowa staff delivered 5,000 petition signatures to state Sen. Dick Dearden, chair of the Natural Resources Committee, calling on the Legislature to protect our rivers from Big Ag's dangerous pollution.

We were joined by Sen. Joe Bolkcom; Bill

Stowe, CEO of Des Moines Water Works; and Gary Klicker, a local Iowa farmer.

"If an ordinary farmer like me can make sure manure isn't flowing from my fields into our rivers and streams, then so can Big Ag," said Klicker. "It doesn't matter what size farm you have; we all must do our part."



Photo: Staff

more online

◀ Campaign Coordinator Josh Kublie and other Environment Iowa staff delivered 5,000 petition signatures to Sen. Dick Dearden.

Visit www.EnvironmentIowa.org to learn more about our campaign to protect Iowa's rivers.



Photo: Staff

To our members

In June, President Obama announced a plan to address global warming. The plan includes increased clean energy and energy efficiency, as well as cuts to carbon pollution from new and existing power plants.

These are crucial steps in the increasingly urgent fight against global warming, and President Obama's announcement comes after years of advocacy from Environment Iowa and our allies.

The president's speech was heartening and exciting. But it will take strong, committed activism to make this plan work—at the grassroots level, in the Capitol, and in Washington. We need to cut our dependency on dirty energy, increase our use of clean energy like solar and wind, boost energy efficiency, and dramatically cut our carbon emissions from coal-fired power plants.

Here at Environment Iowa, we're ready for the work ahead of us. And we're so grateful to have you on our side.

Sincerely,

Dan Kohler, Regional Program Director

Recent action

Proposed fracking rules fail to protect natural heritage

In May, as one of the first major policy decisions for new Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposed scant protections for America's natural heritage with its revised rules for hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking." The move comes even as the oil and gas industry is seeking to expand drilling near treasured places and drinking water sources for millions of Americans.

In fall 2011, the Obama administration's science advisory panel on fracking recommended the "preservation of unique and/or sensitive areas as off limits to drilling." Yet the BLM's proposal does nothing to implement this core principle: It fails to bar the use of toxic chemicals near sensitive areas; establish safe standards for fracking well construction; or even ban the use of open fracking waste pits. "We urge President Obama to step in and protect our natural heritage—and our drinking water—from dirty drilling," said John Rumpler, senior attorney for Environment Iowa.

Fighting back against cuts to our parks

In June, the National Park Service released a memo planning for cuts to parks across the board—cuts to every park, including Iowa's own Effigy Mounds National Monument and more. The cuts would result in reduced hours of operation, fewer services, and in some cases, even closure.

Our parks aren't just an integral part of our natural heritage; they're also a major economic boon. Iowa's national monuments and historic sites attracted \$12 million in tourism spending in 2011 alone. But year after year, Congress slashes funding for programs that keep our parks open.

Together with our national federation of state groups, Environment Iowa is mobilizing broad public support for our parks and calling on Congress to give these special places the resources they deserve.



Photo: MW/Naasa/Flickr

▲ Effigy Mounds National Monument. Environment Iowa is calling on Congress to stop the cuts and give our parks the funding they deserve.

Obama announces new plan to address global warming

Photo: Rich Griffith

On June 25, President Obama announced a climate plan that will set limits on carbon pollution from power plants, advance energy efficiency and increase the nation's commitment to renewable energy.

In the aftermath of record drought in Iowa and the Midwest, Hurricane Sandy, and other extreme weather events, the president's plan to address global warming was loudly applauded by Environment Iowa and many others.

"Today, President Obama responded to the millions of Americans who have spoken out on behalf of their communities and their families, urging him to lead on climate," said Frank Iannuzzi of Environment Iowa.

Responding to an urgent threat

Left unchecked, global warming is projected to bring to Iowa more intense storms and more unhealthy air days. Scientists have warned that the window is rapidly closing for making the necessary cuts in carbon pollution to protect future generations from the worst consequences of global warming.

To respond to this threat, the president's plan contains several key components. It will:

- **Limit carbon pollution from new and existing power plants.** The president directed the Environmental Protection Agency to set limits on carbon pollution from new and existing power plants, which currently lack any such federal limits despite being the largest single source of the carbon pollution fueling global warming.
- **Invest in energy efficiency.** New efficiency measures for buildings and new appliances will cut carbon pollution by reducing our overall energy demand.
- **Build more renewable energy.** The plan focuses on expanding production of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar, especially on public lands.

- **Support affected communities.** The president's plan will help ensure that communities are better equipped to prepare for and recover from the impacts of global warming.

- **Rebuild U.S. leadership internationally.** The president's plan calls for the U.S. to actively engage in international efforts to address global warming.

Massive grassroots support

Environment Iowa offered special praise for the president's pledge to cut carbon pollution from existing power plants. More than 3.2 million Americans, including thousands of Environment Iowa members, supporters and allies, submitted public comments last year in support of the president setting limits on carbon pollution from power plants.

"Carbon pollution from power plants is a huge part of the global warming problem. Today, President Obama acknowledged this and mapped out a plan for cleaning up this pollution," said Iannuzzi. "We also know that this plan is just one important step in a multi-year effort, and that the proof of the plan's success will be in the pudding. Environment Iowa stands ready to assist the president in following through on this critical commitment."



Photo: White House

research

In June, the president announced a plan to address global warming.

To read our report on global warming and extreme weather, "In the Path of the Storm," visit www.EnvironmentIowa.org/reports.



Photo: Dmitry Kalinovsky/Bigstock

Wind power crucial to climate change plan

Clean, renewable energy like wind power will be an integral part of federal efforts to address global warming.

In June, in his speech on climate change, President Obama emphasized the importance of clean energy in his plan to fight climate change: "The plan I'm announcing today will help us double again our energy from wind and sun."

Wind's success story

The president also praised Iowa specifically for leading the way on wind energy, noting that our state harnesses nearly 25 percent of its electricity from the wind.

In fact, Iowa's current power generation from wind energy displaces as much global warming pollution as taking 1,187,000 cars off the road per year. And the benefits of wind are only set to increase as the wind industry grows: If wind development continues at a pace comparable to that of recent years through 2016, Iowa will reduce global warming pollution by the equivalent of taking an additional 1,047,000 cars off the road.

Nationwide, wind energy now displaces about 68 million tons of global warming pollution per year—as much as is produced by 13 million cars.

As the Obama administration moves forward in implementing its plan to address climate change, wind energy in Iowa will continue its clean energy success story.

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Environment Iowa

Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment Iowa. We focus exclusively on protecting Iowa's air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Leaders called on to support energy efficiency

In June, with the House Energy and Commerce hearing on the Department of Energy's budget taking place, Environment Iowa urged Congress to fund a critical energy efficiency program.

America's buildings are responsible for nearly one-third of our global warming pollution. Energy efficiency programs are the fastest, cheapest and cleanest way to cut the pollution fueling global warming, and save consumers money at the same time.

The Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) is a key federal program that helps low-income families, seniors and individuals with disabilities make energy efficiency improvements to their homes. But in 2012, Congress drastically slashed funding for the program; without an increase in funding for the coming financial year, it's unlikely that the WAP will be able to continue to operate at all in some states. Environment Iowa called on Congress to fully fund the WAP and support commonsense energy efficiency improvements.



Photo: NREL

more inside

Thousands take a stand for rivers; fighting back against cuts to parks; President Obama announces climate plan, and more.

◀ *Installing energy efficiency measures.*