State Election Information:
Advancing Environmental Issues One Step at a Time

Have you ever wondered why the political candidates, legislators and the governor don’t talk about environmental issues? It could be that no one is talking to the candidates about those issues. If they do not hear from their constituents and potential voters, they do not know that the voters are concerned about protecting the environment.

As a voter, you can educate the candidates following some simple steps that are outlined in this document. Perhaps most importantly, talk to your friends, neighbors, and relatives about the candidates and the issues. Our opposition isn't afraid to talk about issues and we shouldn't be afraid.

And vote! Every vote is important.

Acquainting Candidates with Environmental Issues

As a voter, you are in a position to educate the candidate. Here is a simple formula:

- Make the candidate aware of the issue and solutions. Write an email or letter to the candidate describing the issue and what you would like them to support. Include your name, address and phone number in case the candidate wants to follow-up. If the candidate wants more information and you need assistance with an explanation, contact 515-277-8868 or iowa.chapter@sierraclub.org.

- When a candidate is shaking hands, have a one-minute summary of your issue and tell the candidate that you would like to see him or her support the issue.
• Ask the candidate how he or she feels about the issue when they appear at public meetings and campaign events.

• Volunteer for candidates who support your issue, to help them get elected to office. Once they are serving as elected officials, they can begin implementing environmental policies.

• Write letters to the editor of your local paper about your issue. Each newspaper has its own requirements for letters to editor so check with the paper.

• Build some enthusiasm and awareness about environmental issues by talking about the issues to your neighbors, friends and relatives. Don’t be bashful about talking about political issues! Our opponents don’t hesitate.

• Ask your neighbors who are like-minded about the issue to talk to the candidates and write letters to the editor. Having other supporters helps ensure that your interests are known by the candidate and are supported by more than one person.

• If you use social media, such as Facebook or Twitter, be sure to post comments on the issues and candidates. If you’re not already linked into the social networking phenomenon, now is a perfect time to become a member of the community. Many candidates currently have Facebook pages and Twitter accounts. You can too! Social networking can be fun, educational and a medium for you to share your thoughts and ideas with the global community. You can spend as much time as you want on these two networks. It’s up to you. All you need is a computer or a smart phone.

• Express your views on talk radio. Although it can be intimidating at first, talk radio is one of the key means for the public to learn about issues.

• Finally, and most importantly, make your choice at the ballot box.
State Environmental Issues to Discuss with Candidates for the Iowa Legislature

The Iowa Chapter supports the environmental issues listed below.

- Supporting a moratorium on the construction of new CAFOs or expansion of existing CAFOs (Note, CAFOs are confined animal feeding operations, where animals are raised in buildings.)

- Support comprehensively improving the CAFO (confined animal feeding operations) laws so that the neighbors are better protected, water is better protected, and the air emissions are reduced

- Extending Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) beyond 2023, retaining the current funding formulas, funding it at $20 million annual allocation because the program pays for public land acquisition for parks and recreation areas, soil and water enhancement and roadside vegetation

- Implementing a 3/8 cent sales tax to fund the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund, which supports parks, trails, fish and wildlife habitat, and conserving agricultural soils in Iowa, with no changes in the funding formula

- Opposing voter suppression, resisting voter identification requirements, preserving voting rights for felons

- Addressing climate change by supporting policies that increase energy efficiency and conservation opportunities and other policies that transition fossil fuel sources to clean energy solutions

- Supporting legislation that would create an Agriculture Climate Adaptation Plan that would guide Iowa farmers in how to adapt to the effects of climate change

- Expanding the bottle bill to include individual serving-size containers of juice, tea and water as well as increasing the handling fee paid to redemption centers

- Restoring funding for the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture

- Increasing the budget for items that improve public education, public health, parks and recreation, and water quality

- Setting targets for reducing nutrients in each of Iowa’s lakes, rivers, and streams and a date to meet those targets