

SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS: Water Quality

Adopted at the 2016 IFU Convention on December 2, 2016

WHEREAS

In 2015, *E.coli* and toxic algae blooms led the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to close more than two dozen beaches in Iowa state parks;

In 2016 the U.S. Geological Survey reported record nitrogen levels in the Mississippi River and a “dead zone” in the Gulf of Mexico that has grown to 6,800 square miles;

Over the past 5 years, more than 60 Iowa cities, including small towns and rural communities, have faced unsafe nitrate levels in municipal drinking water;

The contamination of private wells poses a serious and growing health risk to many rural residents and farm families;

A warming climate will continue to negatively impact the ecology of Iowa watersheds and accelerate the damage caused by current levels of nutrient pollution;

The Iowa legislature has been unwilling to adequately fund water quality initiatives or to set standards for comprehensive assessment, planning, implementation, and monitoring that would make water quality funding effective; and

All Iowa communities and families, including rural communities and farm families, deserve water that is safe for drinking and safe for children to swim in.

THEREFORE

The members of the Iowa Farmers Union ask Governor Branstad and the Iowa legislature to take immediate action to adequately fund programs that will restore the health of Iowa rivers, lakes, and wetlands, including full funding of the Natural Resources Trust Fund approved by Iowa voters in 2010;

Funding should be allocated via a watershed approach that incorporates comprehensive and consistent assessment, planning, implementation, and monitoring of all water contaminants; and

We further ask the legislature to authorize and fund a water quality monitoring program for private wells, to allow rural residents and local public health agencies to accurately assess the level of water contamination in private wells and the associated public health risks for the rural families and farms that rely on them.