



LEGISLATION

UMC Advocacy Team – JANUARY 2018 (1-8)

WATER QUALITY

SUMMARY OF POSITION: We support measures designed to maintain and improve the water quality for all Iowans. The deteriorating condition of Iowa's

rivers and streams poses a threat to the well-being of our state and nation. A major investment is needed to improve environmental quality.

UNITED METHODIST OFFICIAL STATEMENT:

Our covenant with God calls us to steward, protect, and defend God's creation...We advocate integrated, sustainable management to reduce or eliminate factors contributing to limited water quantity and poorer water quality. We call for measures to preserve groundwater sources, to address polluted runoff that threatens water quality and safety and for effective enforcement against illegal pollution.

1033. Caring for Creation: A Call to Stewardship and Justice
United Methodist Book of Resolutions, 2016, page 69.

We believe both ground and surface waters in the state are being threatened with contamination from diverse sources. The Iowa Annual Conference encourages all Iowans to carefully monitor the purity of state water supplies, and encourage a primary emphasis on voluntary stewardship action and be careful to use scientific information before our government spends tax monies to make rules and regulations.

Resolution #9105, Iowa's Water.
Iowan 2017 Book of Resolutions, page 12

SUPPORTING FACTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

1. More than half of Iowa's waterways that can be tested are polluted, according to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. The nitrogen and phosphorus runoff which pollutes those rivers and streams eventually winds up in the Gulf of Mexico where it has helped grow a "dead zone" as large as the state of New Jersey.

2. Plans to reduce the number of "impaired" waterways in Iowa by encouraging different agricultural practices are estimated to cost hundreds of millions of dollars.

3. Water quality improvement legislation recently proposed offers a fraction of the monetary commitment needed and takes those funds from other important projects such as school facility maintenance.

4. The only large, focused, and sustainable source of money for water quality improvement we see on the horizon is the Natural Resources Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund.

a. The citizens of Iowa voted to establish that Trust by approving a constitutional amendment in 2010 (63% affirmative).

b. The Trust would be funded by increasing the sales tax 3/8 of a cent. 60% of the estimated \$150-180 million raised annually would go to improving, protecting and restoring waterways. The remaining 40% would go toward other environmental improvements, such as trails and wetlands.

c. An Iowa Poll in 2017 determined that 56% still favor the increase in sales tax to fund the Trust (38% opposed).

5. Despite the shortage of revenue our state government currently faces, many legislators still oppose on philosophical grounds any tax increase to fund the Trust.

6. Despite our reluctance to support a regressive sales tax, we recognize that governments need to use taxes available to them for the "common good" and providing clean water for all Iowans enhances the "common good." So we encourage legislators to listen to their constituents who are concerned enough about our state's environmental condition that they have given permission for a sales tax increase to "Fund the Trust".

For more information, contact UMC ADVOCATE Bob Ward, 515-210-8920, or revmbward@msn.com