

FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2006, 11:30 A.M. — NOTE EMBARGO

CONTACT: Mike Owen or Teresa Galluzzo, (319) 338-0773 or [mikeowen@iowapolicyproject.org](mailto:mikeowen@iowapolicyproject.org)

## Paddling Upstream: Iowa's Lagging Environmental Investments New Report Examines State, County Efforts

IOWA CITY, Iowa (Dec. 13, 2006) — Iowa has not put up the money to meet its environmental challenges, a new report shows.

The Iowa Policy Project (IPP) report analyzes budget trends over the past 10 years for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and samples the fiscal picture for county conservation boards.

“Iowa is not making a strong enough commitment to our natural resources,” said Teresa Galluzzo, an IPP research associate and author of the report. “The need for more environmental protection is as clear as the water is dirty.”

The report, “Investing in Iowa’s Environment,” and a two-page executive summary of the findings are available at [www.iowapolicyproject.org](http://www.iowapolicyproject.org). It makes several recommendations, many geared to establishing more stable funding for environmental protection and enhancement.

Galluzzo’s report found that overall, the DNR’s expenditures had a net increase between fiscal years 1997 and 2006. However, expenditures were less from 2003 through 2006 than they were in the previous four years, when adjusted for inflation.

“Overall the budgets of the DNR and three sample conservation boards have not grown in comparison to the need,” Galluzzo said.

Further, she noted, environmental funds were diverted to unrelated purposes during the state’s fiscal crisis following the 2001 recession, and the DNR lost a significant number of full-time equivalent employees.

### ***Recommendations***

Among the recommendations in the report:

- Funding of DNR, Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) and Environment First Fund (EFF) should be shifted to stable and dedicated sources.
- The state should ensure environmental fee revenue is only used for the purpose it was collected.
- REAP should be fully funded. Over the decade it has only been funded to a little more than half of its maximum level.
- Iowa should support the Iowa Trust for Local Conservation, a nonprofit established to assist county conservation boards.
- The state should consider “polluter pays” fees to assure those contaminating the environment are held accountable.

IPP Executive Director David Osterberg said that practice was among several short-term budget fixes that hurt state services generally.

“Iowa responded to its fiscal downturn by cutting services and borrowing from trust funds,” Osterberg said. “Environmental services took a big hit.”

Osterberg added, “We hope our new policy makers will give higher priority to the environment in the coming years.”

“Environmental protection is long-term work and requires long-term, stable funding. Without a steady commitment we can’t expect Iowa’s environment to improve,” said Galluzzo.

Galluzzo noted environmental protection affects both quality of life and the Iowa economy.

“People need clean air and water and access to natural areas for their physical and mental health,” Galluzzo said. “And a strong economy depends on clean water and air, fertile soil and an environment attractive to employees and tourists.”

The Iowa Policy Project (IPP) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy research and analysis organization based in Mount Vernon. IPP reports cover a broad range of topics, most in the areas of economic opportunity, energy and the environment, and tax and budget issues. All reports are available at [www.iowapolicyproject.org](http://www.iowapolicyproject.org).

# # # # #