

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 1, 2021

TO: Ted Corrigan, P.E., CEO and General Manager

FROM: Jennifer Terry, External Affairs Manager

SUBJECT: 2022 Legislative Priorities

For the past year, staff have been meeting with watershed stakeholders, elected officials, agency personnel, and the public to understand possible legislative and policy opportunities for addressing infrastructure and source water challenges in our watersheds. After dozens of meetings, a few key policy areas were daylighted that may be addressed at the state and federal levels for positive impacts to our surface water quality and infrastructure.

At the state level, Advocacy Strategies and our DMWW team have been meeting with state and local elected officials over the summer to inform them about surface water quality issues in our rivers. Several state legislators and city councilors toured the Fleur Drive treatment facility and had the opportunity to talk with Ted Corrigan about water quality and the collaborative partnerships staff have been undertaking. The 2022 state legislative priorities reflect policy and funding to support public-private partnerships, increased accountability and transparency of the state's water quality funding, and opportunities for upstream/downstream education for landowners in our watersheds.

Federal legislation and policy have become increasingly important to DMWW. The past year, DMWW staff have been meeting with the Iowa Congressional delegation to keep them informed of our issues. Senator Ernst and her staff toured the Fleur Drive treatment facility and discussed policy issues and possible legislative fixes. In order to increase input on legislation and stay up-to-speed on federal issues, DMWW secured the services of Woodberry Associates, a Washington, DC-based public affairs firm with Iowa ties. The Woodberry team works hand-in-hand with DMWW staff to continue strengthening relationships between Iowa and D.C. The federal legislative priorities reflect four key areas of emphasis for 2022: research and mitigation of harmful algal blooms, PFAS remediation, federal support for infrastructure funding, and maximizing our relationships and partnerships with other groups and organizations.

Des Moines Water Works 2022 State Legislative Priorities

Increase accountability, transparency, and targeted spending of state water quality funding

- Direct SF512 funds to water quality improvement in the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers.
- Increase accountability for how SF512 funds are spent and demonstrate the outcomes of the expenditures.
- Require any entity that receives funds associated with SF512 to provide educational materials to stakeholders about conservation best practices and source water protection for drinking water sources.
- Set a deadline for nutrient reductions outlined in the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy.

Create public-private partnerships to protect source water.

- Expand state investment in public-private partnerships to expand the local saturated buffer project model in Polk County into Greene, Dallas, and Boone Counties.
- Invest state funds to expand the Urban Ag Seeding Partnership which supports purchase and leasing of a cover crop seeders.
- Implement geo-spatial mapping of manure application and management in the Raccoon and Des Moines River Watersheds.

Allow drainage district boards to make local level decisions about water quality.

- Allow drainage district funds to be used for vegetative buffers.
- Provide educational materials about conservation best practices and source water protection to property owners at required drainage improvement meetings.

Des Moines Water Works 2022 Federal Legislative Priorities

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)

- Create a multi-agency pathway to funding and prioritization of Harmful Algal Bloom research, prevention, and mitigation in the Des Moines River, specifically Saylorville Reservoir
- Opportunities for implementation include:
 - Authorization through the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) to give the Army Corps of Engineers additional authority to address HABs
 - Creation of an interagency task force to research, prevent and mitigate risk

PFAS

- Continued education to Congressional delegation about PFAS concerns and funding needs for DMWW's source water system
- Support Senator Ernst's amendment in the Defense Authorization Act that will assist with PFAS studies and eventual remediation at Air National Guard bases (including Des Moines)
- Monitoring and education around various legislative and administrative proposals on liability and compliance

Federal Support for Infrastructure Funding

- Engage to ensure federal funding eligibility for water and lead pipe funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework (signed into law November 16th)
- Seek eligibility for forgivable loans through the State Revolving Fund

Maximize Association Strategic Partnerships

- Build relationships and partnerships around shared concerns/goals
- Work with American Metropolitan Water Association to poll other like-situated utilities for funding strategies to access federal funds provided through state and local grants (where water infrastructure is an eligible use)
- Engage with the National Special Districts Coalition