

2020 LEGISLATIVE POLICY OF THE IOWA LAND IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTORS' ASSOCIATION

01/05/2020

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Mission Statement:

To increase the productivity and profit of our membership through education, legislation and leadership.

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SECTION 1

FARM BILL

1.1 FARM BILL POLICY

- a. Agricultural policies should continue and expand environmental programs such as CRP and permanent conservation practices. Payments for conservation practices should be supported and liberally funded.
- b. Farm Bill conservation programs should be resource-driven and locally-led with sufficient flexibility to direct funding to local priorities and concerns. Program delivery must be tailored to the natural resource needs in the states and local areas. (2011)

1.2 RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- a. We encourage new investment in Iowa processing facilities that add value to Iowa's agriculture products.
- b. We support a requirement to use bio-lubricants, Bio-diesel and Ethanol by federal, state and local government.
- c. We support the use of biodegradable products by using corn and soybean products. (2012)

SECTION 2

CONSERVATION

2.1 SOIL CONSERVATION

- a. We applaud the efforts of farmers and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to control erosion through conservation compliance planning and we recommend a minimum 50% cost sharing on permanent soil conservation practices.
- b. We support the concept of third-party vendors.
- c. We support the creation of a construction work zone with the incentive for summer construction, reserved for establishing permanent conservation structures. One-year paid period for the establishment of waterways, terraces, drainage tile, or other permanent conservation practices. (2015)

2.2 CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

- a. We support a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that addresses the multiple environment challenges of soil erosion, water quality, and wildlife habitat and allows producers to continue to make environmentally compatible improvements to these acres under an approved plan.
- b. We support established permanent conservation practices that can meet soil loss requirements should be allowed to enter CRP programs.
- c. We support cost-share of permanent conservation practices done during a 10-year CRP contract without forfeiture of CRP payments.
- d. We support voluntary contract extensions with retained funding for the establishment of conservation structures or practices utilizing cost share program dollars

2.3 WETLANDS

- a. We Support Wetland Reserve easements being subordinate to a drainage district's right to maintain and improve its tile mains and other structures.
- b. We support two-acre exclusion for farmable wetlands similar to the criteria for sod busting. (2012)
- c. Farmed wetland rules should be eliminated. (2012)

2.4 WATER QUALITY

- a. The goal of achieving and maintaining quality groundwater is the mutual responsibility of all urban, industrial and rural users of water.
- b. We support legislation, which would require the use of “credible” (scientifically defensible) data for listing of Iowa water bodies as impaired as defined by Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act.
- c. We support legislation that would modify the clean water act to give USDA regulatory authority for non-point source pollution. This would include transfer of section 319 appropriations to USDA for use in conjunction with EQIP appropriation to fund farmer cost-share programs.
- d. We recommend the state of Iowa extend eligibility to private sector borrowers for the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund. This would allow more access to low interest loans to address agricultural water management.
- e. Encourage EPA to adopt science-based water quality standards that are attainable for the TMDL process.
- f. We oppose removing the word “navigable” from the clean water act. (2012)
- g. We support the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy with the voluntary implementation of the practices. (2013)
- h. We support credible scientific analysis of nutrient load and the reduction of nutrient in drainage runoff. (2013)
- i. We support DNR proposal for eliminating publication of storm water runoff permits. (2013)
- j. We oppose the expanded jurisdiction of the EPA for Waters of the US (WOTUS). (2016)

2.5 INPUT USE

- a. Iowa DNR should inform stakeholders in “305” watersheds of water quality problems so the problems can be addressed voluntarily in the early stages rather than allowing the water quality to deteriorate to the impaired “303” status which will require TMDL implementation

2.6 LAND USE

- a. We support individual property owners land rights.
- b. We oppose condemnation of private lands for urban sprawl.

2.7 GENERAL

- a. We support legislative action to provide tax credits for permanent conservation practices (waterways, terraces, drainage tile)

SECTION 3

FINANCIAL HEALTH OF LICA

3.1. TAXES

- a. We support the elimination of all federal estate taxes
- b. We support the elimination of all state estate taxes
- c. We support the increase of the gas taxes provided it is still constitutionally protected and dedicated to the highway trust fund. (second, passed 2013)
- d. We support removing the sales tax on construction equipment. (second, passed 2013)
- e. Iowa LICA supports 3/8 cent increase in sales tax to put towards permanent conservation practices. (second, passed 2019)
- f. We support full coupling of section 179 tax depreciation (second, passed 2019)

SECTION 4
TRANSPORTATION

4.1. Roads

- a. We support the all systems permit and encourage all counties and cities to participate.
- b. We support the creation of a statewide county/city combination over width and overweight permit. (2012)
- c. We support a state permit that allows an annual oversize/overweight permit on the Interstate system. (2016)

4.2 River

- a. We support the modernization of the inland waterway transportation system with trust funds prioritized for upgrading and replacing Locks and Dams.
- b. Support legislation that holds any environmental restoration projects to the same cost/benefit standards as flood control and navigation projects.
- c. Encourage all affiliated states to support legislature for lock and dam upgrades.
- d. Encourage the flow levels of the Missouri River to be maintained to support barge traffic and energy plants.
- e. The government should make a commitment to develop our infrastructure such as improving the lock and dam system on the Mississippi River.

SECTION 5

General

5.1 Associations

- a. We support the National LICA (2002)
- b. We support the Iowa Corn Growers and the Iowa Soybean Association for their work in Conservation and Legislative actions. (2002) (2016)
- c. Iowa LICA opposes Chesapeake-bay type water quality regulations for all Iowa watersheds. (2011)
- d. LICA supports the continued funding of the Small Watershed Program and the Watershed Rehabilitation Program. (2011)
- e. LICA supports new proven technologies in all conservation programs and research to continue their development. These computerized online tools coupled with LIDAR and intuitive GIS-based technology look to have the potential to help landowners quickly see how practices such as farm ponds, grassed waterways, wetlands, and other structural practices will fit on their land. (2020)
- f. We support One Call operators to read off the list of contacted utilities and provide contact information for those utilities. We still support the 48-hour notification. Involved utilities have a person contact the contractor when locate is done. (2013) (2020)
- g. Iowa LICA supports the Agricultural Drainage Management Coalition. (2012)
- h. Iowa LICA supports Agribusiness Association of Iowa.

5.2 Regulation

- a. Iowa LICA is opposed to contractor licensing. (2012)
- b. LICA supports the development of policies that reflect the IDOT and insurance company regulations regarding distracted driving. (2012)
- c. Enable all LICA members to have the ability and opportunity to comment on impending regulation for OSHA, MSHA, DOT. (2012)
- d. Support LICA members in having the ability and resources to review the CSA driver and company records.
- e. We fully support existing provisions in the Fair Labor Standards Act that permit the Department of Labor to establish appropriate standards for youth employment on the farm. (2011)

- f. We support legislation requiring utility locators to identify depth/elevation/width of utility on all locates and locate farm gas taps. (2012)
- g. We support legislation requiring tracer wire to be installed on all new underground public utility construction. (i.e. water, gas, transmission pipeline, electricity, and communications) (2013)
- h. LICA supports the unmodified RFS with the exception of the Small Refinery Waivers. (Renewable Fuel Standard) (2020)

5.3 Education

- a. We support funding to educate contractors and government agencies on the habitat for the Indiana bat and determining an exemption period for the removal of trees that are ideal habitat for the Indiana bat. (2012)
- b. We support the two-year construction program at the Northwest Community College. (2013)
- c. We support efforts to expand broadband access to underserved rural areas, but it must not come at the expense of high precision GPS. (2012)

New discussion topics: