



## Legislative Proposals for 2015

- 1. Crep/Wetlands Funding** – The IDDA supports an increased state appropriation from the “Environment First” fund for the Crep/Wetlands program. Every dollar appropriated by the state is able to leverage four federal dollars. The current state appropriation level is \$1 million. With increasing land prices across the state, CREP appropriated dollars do not go as far. The program currently has a multi-year waiting list of interested landowners. An increased state appropriation would allow increased construction of nitrate removal wetlands providing increased protection for Iowa’s water. The program used to be funded at \$1.5 million annually but several years ago, that amount was cut to \$1 million. IDDA supports restoring the funding to at least \$1.5 million annually.
- 2. Ag Drainage Well Closure** – There are currently about 45 Ag drainage wells in active use – acting as direct chemical pipelines into drinking water supplies. Previously, state funds were provided to help close these drainage wells. The program was not funded in FY ‘15 due to veto of the appropriation by the Governor. So, for the second time in less than five years, the program has to be resurrected. Due to the fact that we have lost one year’s worth of closure money, the program needs to an additional appropriation over previous years to “catch-up.” Previously, the program had been funded at \$1.62 million. Secretary Northey, in his budget request to the Governor, has requested \$1.92 million. IDDA supports that request.
- 3. Rebuilding Drainage Infrastructure** - The Missouri River Floods of 2011 did extensive damage to the drainage infrastructure in districts that lie along the river. Those districts have found that existing state law – particularly with regards to combining districts, annexation of land and bidding requirements do not contemplate the activity that will have to occur to rebuild that infrastructure. In response to these issues, the 2013 legislature passed HF 2344 which dealt with the issues of mergers, bidding and combining districts. This was the largest piece of legislation that IDDA has ever supported. Like most pieces of comprehensive legislation, this will need to be “fine-tuned” in 2015. Areas that need to be addressed are the notification requirements for merging districts, a cleaner definition of horizontal/vertical infrastructure and possibly project notification requirements.
- 4. State Water Quality Initiative** – IDDA has supported the State Water Quality Initiative, which is farmer/landowner approach to improving the state’s water quality. Currently, the funding level for that initiative is \$4.4 million. Additional funds for that program would allow IDALS to continue offering cost share dollars to farmers trying new water quality practices, expand work in targeted watersheds to achieve measurable water quality improvements and develop new programs to help engage all Iowans in water quality efforts. Secretary Northey has requested \$7.5 million for that program. IDDA supports that request.