

March 3, 2021

Dear Iowa General Assembly Members:

The 100 undersigned organizations urge you to support enactment of a legislative moratorium on new and expanded factory farms in Iowa.

Iowa's water pollution problems have reached crisis levels. In 2017, hogs on Iowa's factory farms produced 72 billion pounds of manure—two and a half times the weight in human sewage produced by the New York City metropolitan area.¹ No longer a valuable fertilizer, this manure is applied to fields at rates that far exceed crops' ability to absorb them, and the excess runs off into already polluted rivers and streams. As a result, agricultural pollution has damaged more than 1,000 miles of Iowa's rivers and streams and over 59,000 acres of its lakes, ponds and wetlands.²

High levels of nitrates from factory farm pollution threatens both aquatic species and the health of those who drink from the tap. Des Moines Water Works, the largest water utility in Iowa, consistently struggles to provide safe drinking water to Des Moines residents due to excessive amounts of nitrates from factory farms upstream.³ Des Moines famously has one of most expensive nitrate removal systems in the world, but it is far from the only place in Iowa with unsafe drinking water. In 2015, nitrate pollution, which has been linked to certain cancers, birth defects and other diseases, exceeded federal limits in 11 of the state's public water supplies.⁴ More than 200 of Iowa's community water systems struggle with high nitrate levels.⁵

The rise of factory farms has resulted in a steep decline in Iowa's independent family farms. Between 1982 and 2007, the number of hog farms in Iowa plunged by 82 percent, while the average number of hogs per farm rose from just under 500 to just

¹ Food & Water Watch analysis of Iowa CAFO manure production. USDA 2017 Census of Agriculture. USDA National Resources Conservation Service (NCRS). "Agricultural Waste Management Field Handbook." Chapter 4, Agricultural Waste Characteristics. March 2008. U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO). "Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations: EPA Needs More Information and a Clearly Defined Strategy to Protect Air and Water Quality from Pollutants of Concern." GAO-08-944. September 2008. U.S. Census Bureau.

² EPA. "Iowa assessment data 2014." Available at https://ofmpub.epa.gov/waters10/attains_index.home. Accessed August 2018.

³ Snider, Annie. "Iowa utility's lawsuit takes new stab at old nutrient problems." E&E News. January 29, 2015; Masters, Clay. "Iowa's nasty water war." Politico. January 21, 2016.

⁴ Bienkowski, Brian. "My number one concern is water." Environmental Health News. November 14, 2017.

⁵ Royte, Elizabeth. "The simple river-cleaning tactics that big farms ignore." National Geographic. December 7, 2017 at 6.

over 5,000 — a 10-fold increase.⁶ And this pork isn't ending up on the plates of Iowa residents. Pork is the second most exported commodity in the state of Iowa. In fact, Iowa is the top pork exporter in the country, sending close to \$2 billion in pork to countries abroad.⁷ Iowans are burdened by the impacts and the pollution this industry generates while the pork-- and the corporate profits-- leave our state.

Officials in both rural and urban counties are fighting to protect their residents. Nearly 25% of Iowa counties have passed resolutions in favor of stronger local control or a legislative moratorium because they recognize they have very little control in the permitting of new or expanded factory farms. The "Master Matrix," a scoring mechanism intended to give communities input, is so weak that in its 15-year existence all but 2% of proposals have passed. A passing score on the Master Matrix is 50% — an "F" by any other standard.

This industry and its unchecked expansion are wreaking havoc on family farms, communities and drinking water. A moratorium will give legislators and regulators an overdue opportunity to evaluate the public health, economic and societal impacts of factory farms while providing Iowa's communities with important statutory protections from further expansion of this industry.

A moratorium on factory farms has widespread political support. Recent polling shows that 63% of Iowans support a moratorium on new and expanding factory farms⁸. We urge Iowa Senators and Representatives to co-sponsor and support legislative proposals for a moratorium on new and expanded factory farms in Iowa.

Sincerely,

Wenonah Hauter
Executive Director
Food & Water Action

Adam Mason
State Policy Director
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement Action Fund

Pat Bowen
Steering Committee Member
100 Grannies for a Liveable Future

Kari Carney
Executive Director
1000 Friends of Iowa

⁶ U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). National Agricultural Statistics Service. 1982 Census of Agriculture. Geographic Area Series — Iowa. AC82-A-15. May 1984 at Table 20 at 16; 2012 Census of Agriculture. State Data at Table 12 at 361.

⁷ USDA. [Fact sheet]. "State Fact Sheets: Iowa." Updated July 30, 2018 at 5.

⁸ Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research (2019). *National Survey on Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)*. Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future.
<https://clf.jhsph.edu/sites/default/files/2019-12/CAFO-moratorium-survey-results.pdf>

Ric Zarwell
President
Allamakee County Protectors

Linda Luhning
Vice Chair
Calhoun County Against CAFOs

E.J. Gallagher
President
Cedar Prairie Group of the Sierra Club

Hannah Connor
Senior Attorney
Center for Biological Diversity

Jane Clark
Chair
Central Iowa Sierra Club

Sister Mary Ann Vogel
President
Congregation of the Humility of Mary

Janet Foust
Representative
Defending our Ixonia Countryside

Gerry Rowland
Representative
Des Moines River Water Trails

Mike Wilcox
Chair
Eagle View Group of the Sierra Club

Jennifer Fahy
Communications Director
Farm Aid

Mary Dougherty
Representative
Farms Not Factories

Sonia Singh & Suzanne Adely
Co-Directors
Food Chain Workers Alliance

Carter Dillard
Senior Policy Advisor
Animal Legal Defense Fund

Emma Schmit
Chair
Calhoun County Democrats

Mike Wyrick
Group Delegate
Cedar Wapsie Group of the Sierra Club

Amy van Saun
Staff Attorney
Center for Food Safety

Brian Bruening
Chair
Clayton County Democrats

Frank James
Director
Dakota Rural Action

Jean Lappe
Organizer
Des Moines County Farmers and Neighbors

Steven Eatough
Representative
Door County Environmental Council

Abel Russ
Senior Attorney
Environmental Integrity Project

Erin Eberle
Director of Engagement
Farm Forward

Nezahualcoyotl Xiuhtecutli
Research Coordinator
Farmworker Association of Florida

Kari Hamerschlag
Deputy Director, Food & Ag
Friends of the Earth

Graham Christensen
President & Founder
GC RESOLVE

Mike Carberry
Director
Green State Solutions

Christopher King
Representative
Grinnell Vegans

Ronald Wyse
Chair
Henry County Farmers and Neighbors

Marie Herring
Board Member
Indivisible Iowa

Edith Haenel
Steering Committee Member
Iowa Alliance for Responsible Agriculture

Paul Norland
President
Iowa Citizens for Responsible Ag, Worth Co.

Jake Tornholm
Chair
Iowa County Farmers and Neighbors

Glenn Hurst, MD
Chair
Iowa Democratic Party Rural Caucus

Molly Hanson
Representative
Iowa Rivers Revival

Thom Krystofiak
Chair
Jefferson Co. Community Rights Network

Bob Martin
Food System Policy Director
John Hopkins Institute for a Liveable Future

Sikowis (Christine Nobiss)
Decolonizer
Great Plains Action Society

Rachel Snodgrass
Environmental Sustainability Chair
Grinnell College Green Fund Committee

Stacia Clinton
National Program Director
Health Care Without Harm

Laura Hubka
Chair
Howard County Democrats

Ben Lilliston
Director of Rural Strategies
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

Sue Dinsdale
Executive Director
Iowa Citizen Action Network

Jim Trepka
Chair
Iowa City Sierra Club

Brian McLain
Chair
Iowa Democratic Party Progressive Caucus

Aaron Lehman
President
Iowa Farmers Union

Denise Cheeseman
Lead Organizer
Iowa Student Action

Diane Rosenberg
President
Jefferson County Farmers and Neighbors

Cherie Mortice
Lead Organizer
Keep Hull Ave Neighborhood Group

Nancy Utesch
Co-founder
Kewaunee C.A.R.E.S

Bob Lacourciere
Officer
Lake County Clean Lakes & Water

Matthew Sheets
Policy Program Organizer
Land Stewardship Project

Terese Grant
President
League of Women Voters of Iowa

Eloise Cranke
Iowa Chapter Coordinator
Methodist Federation for Social Action

Sarah Starman
Organizer
Mighty Earth

Riley Curry
Executive Director
Millenials for Climate Action

Timothy Gibbons
Communications Director
Missouri Rural Crisis Center

Lisa Griffith
National Program Coordinator
National Family Farm Coalition

Valerie Baron
Staff Attorney
Natural Resources Defense Council

Randy Ruppert
Director
Nebraska Communities United

Sue George
Board Member
Northeast Iowans for Clean Air & Water

Carrie Radloff
Chair
Northwest Iowa Group of the Sierra Club

Sharon Donovan
Chair
Occupy the World Food Prize

Joseph Lynch
Owner
Onion Creek Farm

Pat Kerrigan
Board Member
Organic Consumers Association

Madalyn Anderson
Group Leader
Our Revolution - Story County

Allen Smith
President
Partners for the Future: Dickinson County

Andrew Miller
Executive Director
People Demanding Action

Maureen McCue
Coordinator
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Iowa

Scott Puntaney
Chair
Pottawattamie County Democrats

Val Vetter
Treasurer
Poweshiek C.A.R.E.S

Donna Smith
Executive Director
Progressive Democrats of America

Brent Newell
Food Project Senior Attorney
Public Justice

Mike Delaney
Chair
Raccoon River Watershed Association

Carolyn Raffensperger
Executive Director
Science & Environmental Health Network

Cathy Glasson
President
SEIU Local 199

Pam Mackey-Taylor
Director
Sierra Club of Iowa

Gail Philbin
Director
Sierra Club Michigan

Sister Marie Cigrand
Vice-President
Sisters of Saint Francis

Sherri Dugger
Executive Director
Socially Responsible Agriculture Project

Anne Walton
Chair
Southeast Iowa Sierra Club

Jan Danilson
Chair
Southern Boone County Neighbors

Kim Stephens
Representative
Story County for Responsible Agriculture

Ally Rogers
Hub Coordinator
Sunrise Grinnell

Jason Snell
Co-leader
Sunrise Movement of Cedar Rapids

Jake Jansen
Hub Coordinator
Sunrise Movement of Dubuque

Zach Grewe
Representative
Sunrise Movement of Iowa City

Suzan Erem
Executive Director
Sustainable Iowa Land Trust (SILT)

Mary Dougherty
Representative
Sustainable Rural Wisconsin Network

Will Fantle
Co-founder
The Cornucopia Institute

Chris Holbein
Public Policy Director, Farm Animal Protection
The Humane Society of the United States

Marj Van Winkle
Secretary/Treasurer
Walnut Neighbors

Bart Mihailovich
Organizing Manager
Waterkeeper Alliance

Charlie Winterwood
Chair
White Pine Group of the Sierra Club

James Berge
Representative
Worth County Progressives

Juliann Salinas
Executive Director
Women, Food, and Agriculture Network

Jan Corderman
Leadership Team
Women's International League for Peace & Freedom