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STATE OF ILLINOIS
Pollution Control Board

OGLE COUNTY FARM BUREAU *PC#12*

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TO: Dorothy M Gunn
Clerk of the Illinois Pollution Control Board

RE: Public Comment on Expansion of Rochelle Landfill
IPCB Reference PCB 03-218

In the words of New York Yankee great and Baseball Hall of Famer Yogi Berra, "This is déjà vu all over again."

It was just two years ago this approaching Spring that we discussed, debated, analyzed and reviewed the proposed expansion of the Rochelle landfill. While some things have changed in this time period, many other things have remained the same. The one constant that has yet to change concerning this issue is still the most important – The Need.

A fact of life is that no one wants garbage; that's why we dispose of it. Until the day arrives when we live in a totally recyclable society we will always have trash, and the problems that accompany its disposal. In arriving at that goal we must find solutions to the problems and learn to live compatibly with the consequences. However, in a society where we place a high value on developing compatible land uses one can only ask how compatible can this landfill expansion be?

If the expansion were to take place the size of this landfill would rocket from being the 43rd largest landfill in Illinois into the top ten. I am confident that Rochelle, and Ogle County, would rather be known for other things than "Illinois' Dumping Grounds!" This project would expand the current landfill in height to over 960 feet and would increase it's land size over 400 percent to 320 acres, or one-half of a section. What is compatible about that?

Ten years ago Ogle County enacted its Solid Waste Management Plan. By statute the plan had to contain a provision for a guaranteed twenty years of landfill space to accommodate Ogle County's waste disposal needs. Not only did the plan meet the required guarantee, it exceeded it, and still does today. The plan also called for identification on need in any consideration to site a new landfill or expand an existing facility.

Available waste disposal space in our region has actually expanded in the last year, which leads us to wonder if the proposed expansion is to service our needs or those of others? Who really benefits from this expansion – the landfill owners, the facility operators, citizens of Ogle County or residents living in areas outside of the county? My bet is that most folks can identify three beneficiaries in the group I just mentioned, and the one group who will be most negatively impacted.

In Ogle County we have proactively addressed our waste disposal problem. We have achieved over a 25 percent reduction in our waste stream through recycling efforts like drop-off centers, curbside recycling programs and yard waste composting efforts. Have surrounding areas that propose to bring their trash into Rochelle landfill done the same? Have suburban residents who rally against siting landfills in their neighborhoods enacted aggressive recycling programs to reduce their waste stream, or do they just continue to use up our resources and send them on their way eliminating their problem and causing problems for us?

One can only wonder, what happens twenty years from now when this expanded landfill is full? Whose problem is it then, and what solution will be proposed; another expansion?

Don't think these questions carry no validity. The current landfill takes in 250 tons of trash per day. The proposal for expansion calls for 2500 tons per day to enter the facility. This trash isn't coming from Ogle County! Twenty years from now when the city of Rochelle begins to expand eastward it's going to be very difficult to move a nine hundred foot mountain of trash; and who would want to live or work next to it?

It's time that we stop burying our problem and begin addressing it. Before we jump on the bandwagon to promote another landfill expansion in the county we best examine how we can deal with the problem now before it becomes a problem four times bigger later.

As citizens we should be extending our energies not towards siting new landfills or expanding new dumps but rather towards reducing waste volume at the source, both residential and commercial. We should be aggressively working to promote recycling programs and encouraging government officials and private interests to develop more uses for recycled products. We should encourage and support the development of biodegradable products and use them.

Landfills are the easy answer to our waste problem today, but they will be our problem tomorrow.

Believing that the need for this landfill expansion in Rochelle has not been proven, and the future costs to be incurred by citizens do not equal the benefit they will receive, the Ogle County Farm Bureau opposes this expansion.

We encourage Ogle County citizens to get involved in this issue. As Yogi also pointed out; "It ain't over, til it's over."

Sincerely,



Chuck Cawley, President
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