

County of Kane

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OFFICE OF COUNTY BOARD
Kane County Government Center

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MICHAEL W. McCOY
Chairman

August 13, 2004

Chairman Phil Novak
Illinois Pollution Control Board
State of Illinois
Suite 11-500
100 W. Randolph
Chicago, IL 60601

R0421
PC#6

Dear Chairman Novak:

Several months ago, when more than 100 Illinois municipalities were mandated to remove radium from their drinking water, I was informed that many communities were removing the radium from their drinking water by dumping the radioactive solids in the sewer and spreading the resulting sludge on farms and open land.

As I understand it, the IEPA is now proposing to dramatically weaken the Water Quality Standards to allow more of this radioactive carcinogen to be discharged into Illinois waterways.

I am very concerned about how the state is overseeing and regulating community plans to clean up the drinking water. In fact, several months ago I sent a letter to IEPA Director Renee Cipriano posing several important questions: including the safety of discharging radium into the municipal sewer systems and the potential public health and environmental ramifications of such disposal. I also asked if, and if so how, the agency would enforce restrictions on applying the resulting radium-tainted sludge to open land.

Additionally, I am concerned about municipal sewer workers and other public works employees who may be exposed to the radioactive wastes without their knowledge or consent. I would like the IEPA to address the potential long-term implications to workers, and potential liabilities for municipalities that treat and handle the sludge.

My constituents, the residents of Kane County, and the citizens of Illinois deserve to know why the IEPA is allowing communities to clean the drinking water by polluting the land and waterways.

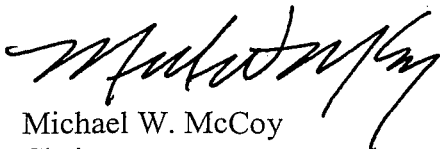
To date, I have not yet heard back from the agency or the director. As you consider the proposed rule change, I would ask that you consider these fundamental environmental and public health and safety questions and reflect on why this makes sense for communities throughout the state. I respectfully request that, unless there are satisfactory answers from the agency that prove there are no threats posed to the public and environment, you reject this proposed rule change. I would also ask that you further consider any enforcement action the board can make regarding violation of existing state radium disposal standards as part of water remediation projects.

The failure to promote and enforce the already existing standards is putting farmers, families, public works employees and future homeowners at unnecessary risk to exposure to highly concentrated amounts of radium.

This issue is of great importance to my constituents along with residents throughout Illinois. All known and unknown threats must be thoroughly explored to protect the public and environment.

I appreciate any consideration you can give to my request.

Sincerely,



Michael W. McCoy
Chairman