

AUG 09 2005

STATE OF ILLINOIS
Pollution Control Board



CITIZENS

AGAINST

RUINING the

ENVIRONMENT

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PC#42

August 3, 2005

The Honorable J. Phillip Novak
Chairman, Illinois Pollution Control Board
100 W. Randolph, Suite 11-500
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Re: Revisions to Radium Water Quality Standards: Proposed New 35 Ill. Adm. Code 302.307 and amendments to 35 Ill. Adm. Code 302.207 and 302.525
R04-021 Rulemaking – Water

Dear Chairman Novak:

Citizens Against Ruining the Environment (CARE) has closely followed the radium water quality standards issue and has appreciated the opportunity to weigh in. As the public comment period draws to a close and the Pollution Control Board considers the consequences of rolling back Illinois' sound radium water quality standards, we ask you to be aware of mounting evidence of environmental contamination's dire effect on the public's health and safety.

Last month the US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) issued a document titled, "*A Regulators Guide to the Management of Radioactive Residuals from Drinking Water Technologies,*" which clearly makes the connection between exposure to radium and serious health effects. The document also highlights the potential for radium accumulation over time and the affect on future land use. This is particularly troubling in areas like Will County that are experiencing suburban sprawl and farm fields that have been contaminated with radium sludge which has and will continue to be converted into subdivisions and parks.

Given the severe health risk surrounding radium and other environmental contaminants, CARE applauds Governor Blagojevich and Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn for their efforts in passing the Community Right to Know Bill. This bill, aimed at ensuring that people living near contamination are promptly notified, gives the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) the authority to advise communities about the presence of contamination and the power to order clean-up of hazardous sites.

However, it defies logic for the administration to support an increase in radiation contamination while it simultaneously signs a law to protect residents from the very contamination it is helping to create.

For the past two years, communities across Illinois have been looking for guidance on the most environmentally-responsible, cost-effective method of removing radium from the drinking water and safely disposing of the contaminated waste. The Illinois EPA's (IEPA) answer is to allow virtually unlimited amounts of radium, a known carcinogen, in our waterways and on our land without knowing the short-term and long-term consequences on our environment, wildlife and most importantly, the public's health and safety.

Now is the time to uphold Illinois' sound environmental standards to protect the public health and safety, instead of paving the way for polluters and increasing radioactive contamination. Now that the IEPA has the responsibility to notify the public about contamination under the Community Right to Know law, it is our hope the agency will realize the potential implications of their proposal to allow unlimited amounts of radium to be spread on our land and in our waterways.

As environmentalists have cautioned since the beginning, and in the wake of the US EPA's guidelines document, the radium disposal situation demands we take a progressive, safe and well-thought out approach. We hope the Illinois Pollution Control Board will take advantage of this unique opportunity to prevent the unnecessary discharge of radium contamination in an effort to keep Illinois at the forefront of sound environmental policy.

Thank you,

Directors

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