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STATE OF ILLINOIS
Pollution Control Board

October 30, 2012

Before the Illinois Pollution Control Board R12-23 (Rulemaking Water)

Prefiled testimony of I. Ronald Lawfer for hearing November 14, 2012

at 10 am Highland Community College Campus, Elizabeth, Illinois

My name is I. Ronald Lawfer and I am a retired dairy farmer, and a farm landowner in Wards Grove township in Jo Daviess County. Our dairy operation is still in the family.

Many livestock farms in Jo Daviess county they have been in their families of many generations. Land in the Lawfer family has exceeded 150 years of continuous ownership.

Settlers to this area were attracted to this area because of the rolling terrain and the availability of clean water. This water was available for livestock the year around in streams, springs or hand dug wells.

For year 100 years this water for livestock. as well as the residents, needed to be obtained directly from the streams or by hand pumping. Farmers realized the importance of preserving quality of the water, long before any regulations were born with the passing the Clean Water Act. Their continued business and ability to survive depended on maintaining clean water.

Now farmers and livestock farmers with the availability of electricity can pump water and as a result can in some cases increase the concentration and specialization of their operations. But these operations still depend on a clean water supply for livestock and family needs. For example dairy operations have their well water inspected regularly by the Department of Public Health to maintain a permit to market their milk.

In the last couple of decades the number of dairy farms have decreased by a large percentage. Some of these have chosen other occupations or cropping methods because of economic reasons. Other have been visited on a drive by basis by the Illinois EPA agency and offered an proposal to either remodel their facilities or face administrative action. Faced with these mandated and expensive improvements many family farmers have chosen to exit livestock production.

The land use of the area has changed considerably, many as a result of the IEPA visits. Land that was a crop rotation containing hay and pasture now becomes only corn and soybean production. These rotations on rolling driftless terrain found in Northwest Illinois subjects the land to increased erosion resulting in increased water shed sediment. .

The USEPA proposed rule of October 14, 2011 does not address the issue for IEPA to study the increased burden of soil erosion, caused by land use changes and the effect on water quality.

I ask that during the Board's hearing process, all parties be made aware of the financial requirements to apply for the permit program to be administrated by the IEPA. This is in addition to the annual fees recently passed into law. Is there evidence that these increased costs will result in improved and cleaner water quality.

Farmers live on the farm 365 days of the year, 24 hours a day. They have a more complete understanding of saving the environment then some bureaucrat in Springfield or Washington. Thank you for your time and I would be happy to address any questions.

I. Ronald Lawfer