

# Insanity to bury hazardous waste over water supply

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JOURNAL STAR

I have been following the issue of proposed expansion of the Peoria Disposal Company's hazardous waste landfill on the west edge of Peoria, and attended PDC's presentation to the Peoria City Council last November.

This landfill is the worst thing I have seen in my 90 years in this community. I say that without reservation.

It is amazing that, in this era of space technology, we are building a mountain here of a couple million tons of a huge assortment of terribly toxic chemicals in the belief that a plastic liner will forever prevent them from leaking into the aquifer, from which over half of the Peoria area's tap water is pumped. PDC's toxic waste landfill sits right over that precious groundwater supply. Plastic breaks and cracks with age and stress, and chemicals can eat into and through it.

Moreover, it is the only hazardous waste land-

fill in Illinois and the greater part of the Midwest, and one of only a few in the nation. Many of the most toxic chemicals are permitted to be buried here, and 15 states send them here.

The majority of these chemicals are volatile, meaning they literally dissipate into the air we breathe. Yet there is no air pollution testing, and this factor is being ignored by our government.

If mankind keeps handling its waste this way, we are going to go the way of the dinosaurs. Of the billions we spend on space programs, we must spend as much, indeed, even far more on caring for and preserving our space ship Earth. We have to find ways to detoxify and recycle all such waste. It is insanity.

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STATE OF ILLINOIS  
Pollution Control Board

BILL RUTHERFORD SR.  
FOREST PARK FOUNDATION  
PEORIA HEIGHTS

PC#168

## To Whom This Concerns:

Four months after renown conservationist Bill Rutherford, who died Nov. 21, sent the above letter, the Peoria County Board voted 12 to 6 not to grant a permit to Peoria Disposal Co. to expand its toxic waste landfill here. That vote followed the largest and longest (6 days) public hearing in area history.

PDC is appealing the county's permit denial to the Illinois Pollution Control Board. The IPCB hearing on the case was January 8, and it will accept citizen comment letters though April 6! Let the IPCB know your views. The letters will be posted on the IPCB's web site. Yours will count. The address is:

← { Illinois Pollution Control Board, Clerk's Office, Case 2006-184  
100 W. Randolph St., Suite 11-500, Chicago, IL 60601 (Letters only. E-mails not accepted)

Also, write or fax the Journal Star.

## The Situation:

LANDFILLS NEVER DECOMPOSE (The same for PLASTIC)  
PDC's proposed expansion would triple the volume of its toxic waste landfill, adding 2.2 million tons to 40 acres on the top of its hilltop landfill -- already much higher than originally due to years of dumping. It would make that hill another 45 feet higher at least (5 stories), a superdome of toxic waste considerably higher than any other hill in the area, and covering an area greater than Bradley U's campus. Its contents, from 15 states so far, would be encased in manmade sidewalls of dirt lined with plastic membrane and packed down by bulldozers. Hardly a leakproof scenario.

PDC's is the only remaining commercial hazardous waste landfill from Indianapolis to the Rocky Mts. in the nation's upper half. Such waste from a dozen states is regularly brought here. PDC has been operating since 1940, but state toxic waste regulations didn't begin until 1987. And:

- \*\*The dump site sits above the shallow sand-gravel aquifer from which most of the Peoria area water supply is drawn. Yet PDC's Illinois EPA permit allows 843 of the nation's most toxic chemicals to be put there -- but requires just quarterly tests for only 20 -- with PDC designating the day for EPA to take test samples.
- \*\*This landfill has vents for gaseous emissions and is immediately upwind of Peoria. But there is no testing for air pollution, though research has revealed it to be a major health issue around such landfills elsewhere.

The federal "toxic release inventory" for Peoria County is by far the highest in Illinois, 4 times more than Cook County's (Chicago), and 16th in the nation, according to the 2002 USEPA report. It lists the PDC toxic waste landfill as releasing 21 times more than any other area source.

This landfill is a "forever" hazard. We need to close it now with strictly enforced perpetual safeguards.

Tom Edwards, River Rescue, 902 W. Moss Ave, Peoria, IL 61606

TOXIC WASTES COULD ENTER OUR GOOD AQUIFER  
& CAUSE EXTREME POLLUTION IN OUR CLEAN WATER.

Without this new permit, the landfill will have to be closed.

Tell our state legislators, too.