

## 1) Raise Clean Air Operating Fees So Illinois Can issue Timely Permits and Conduct Annual Inspections to Protect Our Families and Our Future

Millions of Illinois residents are being exposed to harmful levels of air pollution from 273 of the state's largest polluters that don't have clean air operating permits. This is despite a March 1998 federal deadline for the Illinois to issue such permits. The state's twenty-eight unpermitted coal-fired power plants alone trigger thousands of asthma attacks and contribute to hundreds of premature deaths each year. Two-hundred and forty-five other large (and unpermitted) polluters in Illinois emit millions of additional pounds of dangerous air pollutants causing cancer, heart attacks and other breathing problems.

**Illinois' Operating Permits Program is One of the Worst in the Nation** ~ Illinois has the second worst permit issuance record in the Midwest; Only Ohio has a worse record. At the same time, it has failed to issue timely permits, Illinois has also cut funding for enforcement, so it takes up to FOUR YEARS for a polluter to be inspected. Illinois has stopped processing all permit modifications or renewals in spite of federal law requirements that such changes be processed in 18 months. Equally devastating is that Illinois has no staff to review test data submitted by companies. Thus, potential violators go unpunished.

**Protecting Our Air Does Not Require Higher Taxes** ~ Federal law requires states to charge permit fees to fund the operating permits program. Illinois' fees raise only \$9.8 million. The biggest problem is that Illinois has a cap on fees for \$100,000 for the state's largest polluters. This is the lowest cap in the Midwest. The next lowest is Indiana (\$200,000). Minnesota's cap is \$1 million.

**Raise the Cap on Largest Polluters and Add Automatic Fee Increase** ~ For too long the state's largest polluters have enjoyed bargain basement permit fees, a lack of permits, and almost no inspections. The lack of permits and inspections is bad for our air quality. That is why Sierra Club supports raising the fee cap to at least \$300,000 for the state's fortysix largest polluters and instituting an automatic annual fee increase tied to inflation. Such a modest fee increase is long overdue.

### **What You Can Do**

Call you state officials listed below. Tell them to vote in favor of raising the air pollution operating permit fees.

## 2) Make Water Polluters Pay for Cleaning Up Our Rivers, Lakes and Streams

You should also call your Illinois elected officials to support SB 1060/ HB 2540 that will establish the IL Clean Water Fund. Each year, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency issues about 800 free permits to discharge industrial wastewater, treated sewage, and other forms of pollution into Illinois' rivers, lakes, and streams. Issuing these licenses to pollute uses taxpayer dollars that could be spent cleaning up pollution. At least 39 other states, and all of our neighbor states, charge a fee for water pollution permits. In Illinois, dischargers do not pay one cent for these permits, which cost taxpayers millions to process, enforce, and monitor compliance. Dischargers also do not pay one cent for the privilege to pollute the rivers and lakes where we get our drinking water and fish, boat, and swim. Governor Rod Blagojevich has proposed that polluters be charged a fee for these permits, and the proceeds be used to make our waters safe again.

These bills would:

- **Fund Cleanup of Our Rivers, Lakes, and Streams:** Revenue from water pollution permit fees will fund restoration plans for the state's most polluted waters. 414 polluted watersheds are on a cleanup waiting list due to a lack of funds.
- **Provide an Incentive to Reduce Pollution:** This legislation would charge a higher fee for polluters that discharge more pollutants, and an extra fee for the discharge of toxic chemicals. This would provide an incentive to reduce the amount and toxicity of the permitted pollutants.
- **Be Fair to Municipalities:** Municipal wastewater treatment plants that do a good job of cleaning wastewater would be charged less than municipal plants that don't do a good job. In addition, the new Illinois Clean Water Fund could be used to help municipalities comply with clean water standards.

### **What You Can Do**

Ask your state representative and senator to support SB 1060 and HB 2540 to institute water pollution permit fees in Illinois. These fees are in the Governor's budget and are necessary in order to clean up Illinois' water.

### **Contact Information**

Rep. Mike Bost	(618) 457-5787	(217) 782-0387	632 Statehouse, Springfield, IL, 62706
Rep. Gary Forby	(618) 439-2504	(217) 782-1051	257-S Stratton, Springfield, IL, 62706
Senator Leuchtefeld	(618) 243-9013	(217) 782-8137	103B Statehouse, Springfield, IL, 62706
Rep. Brendan Phelps	(618) 253-4189	(217) 782-5131	265-S Stratton, Springfield, IL, 62706
Rep. Dan Reitz	(618) 443-5757	(217) 782-1018	200-9S Stratton; Springfield, IL, 62706
Senator Larry Woolard	(618) 985-5559	(217) 782-5509	M115 Statehouse, Springfield, IL, 62706
Rep. Chuck Hartke	(217) 342-2353	(217) 782-2087	245-E Stratton, Springfield, IL, 62706
Senator John O. Jones	(618) 242-9511	(217) 782-0471	103D Statehouse, Springfield, IL, 62706