



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Amendments to IL Livestock Law Seek to Curb Irresponsible Growth of Factory Farms

*Public health, pollution and rural lifestyle protection drive change to current pro-agribusiness regulations*

**SPRINGFIELD, IL—MARCH 27, 2014**—A coalition of community advocates and environmental groups have proposed a bill in the Illinois legislature -- House Bill 5637 -- to amend the Illinois Livestock Management Facilities Act (LMFA), a controversial pro-agribusiness law criticized as leaving the floodgates open for irresponsible factory farm development in Illinois since the late 1990s. In response to a citizen's petition, Illinois has been targeted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as having an inadequate system for regulating factory farm pollution. The state has thousands of confinement operations -- over a hundred of which have had environmental violations -- that force surrounding neighbors to live with polluted water, nauseating odors and reduced property values.

The Illinois Citizens for Clean Air & Water, Prairie Rivers Network, Socially Responsible Agricultural Project and Illinois Environmental Council are among the coalition of groups pushing for passage of the bill sponsored by Representative Naomi Jakobsson (D) of the 103rd District, Representative Laura Fine (D) of the 17th District and Representative Kelly M. Cassidy (D) of the 14th District.

"Fundamental changes to the Illinois Livestock Law are necessary and long overdue," says Danielle Diamond, attorney for the Illinois Citizens for Clean Air & Water and executive director of the Socially Responsible Agricultural Project. "The environment and the quality of life and health of hundreds of family farmers and rural residents from across the state have been sacrificed by an unfit law favoring polluting factory farms and agribusiness interests for too long."

The LMFA was designed with all decision-making authority for siting new factory farms resting with the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA), a state agency that promotes agribusiness. A search of state records shows that IDOA has never denied a construction permit for a factory farm in Illinois, despite opposition from many neighbors and communities over the course of almost two decades.

House Bill 5637 would change the LMFA so that county boards have the authority to refuse new factory farm proposals and neighboring residents have the right to call for public hearings on new applications. Local citizens would also have the right to challenge IDOA siting decisions if a factory farm proposal does not meet the requirements of the law. The bill would also increase siting setbacks from towns, neighboring residences and waterways since factory farm pollution rarely remains within the confines of the property on which these facilities are located.

“The current law has given government agencies and big corporations all the power and local communities no rights at all,” says Ramona Cook, a McDonough County resident whose Illinois family farming roots go back to the 1830s. “We’re faced with serious health threats, declining property values, damage to our businesses and the lost use of our own land. The new law will give a voice back to the local communities and property owners to determine their own futures, and that’s exactly where it should be.”

On average, livestock produce three times as much waste as humans. A single factory farm confining thousands of animals generates as much waste as a small city. The health and lifestyle effects of the endless output of animal waste on surrounding properties, populations and communities can be dangerous and debilitating.

“Since the D & B hog factory started operating in November last year, I literally have to check the air direction every morning before going outside,” said Adams County organic hobby farmer Kevin Tushaus. “Without a doubt, the cloud of foul odors coming out of that place has caused headaches, nausea, gagging, spontaneous vomiting and shortness of breath – not to mention depression that comes with living in a constant state of anxiety. When the wind is out of the north or north-northwest, my day is done before it starts.”

The proposed amendments to the LMFA will require more businesses and individuals proposing the siting of a factory farm to submit a waste management plan as part of the permitting process, as well as impose more stringent requirements to prevent water pollution.

“Fish kills are frequently caused by failures of land application equipment that release thousands of gallons of livestock waste into nearby waterways,” said Stacy James of Prairie Rivers Network. “House Bill 5637 would prohibit equipment from being left unattended and would require factory farms to develop a spill control and prevention plan.”

To view a copy of HB5637, please go to [Illinois House Bill 5637](#)

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#### **About Illinois Citizens for Clean Air & Water (ICCAW)**

Illinois Citizens for Clean Air and Water, a state-wide coalition of family farmers and community groups advocating for sound policies and practices that protect the environment, human health, and rural quality of life from the impacts of large-scale, industrialized livestock production facilities in Illinois. For more information about ICCAW, please go to [www.iccaw.org](http://www.iccaw.org).

#### **About Prairie Rivers Network (PRN)**

Prairie Rivers Network is Illinois advocate for clean water and healthy rivers, championing clean, healthy rivers and lakes and safe drinking water to benefit the people and wildlife of Illinois. Drawing upon science and working cooperatively with others, PRN advocates for public policies and cultural values that sustain the ecological health and biological diversity of water resources and aquatic ecosystems. PRN is the independent, state affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation. For more about PRN, please go to <http://prairierivers.org>

#### **About Socially Responsible Agricultural Project (SRAP)**

Socially Responsible Agricultural Project provides free, professional assistance to communities working to protect themselves from factory farms and their impact on local communities and populations, and to those who are trying to reclaim agriculture by producing and marketing sustainable agricultural goods. More information can be found at [www.sraproject.org](http://www.sraproject.org).