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Livestock producers would face fee

SPRINGFIELD — Livestock producers would no longer be exempt from having to pay fees to discharge pollution, under a bill passed by the state Senate this week.

The Clean Water Funding Fairness Act, sponsored by Sen. Mike Frerichs, D-Champaign, and Rep. Michael Tryon, R-Crystal Lake, now goes to Gov. Pat Quinn for his signature.

Industrial polluters are required to pay an annual fee for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits. But “concentrated animal feeding operations” have been exempted from the fee.

As a result, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency has been paying for regulation of livestock producers with fee money paid by other permit holders.

The bill was drafted by several environmental groups, including the **Prairie Rivers Network**, Environment Illinois and Illinois Citizens for Clean Air & Water.

“This bill is about fairness and protecting Illinois waters,” said Max Muller, program director with Environment Illinois.

“A minority of factory farms are significant polluters of Illinois waterways,” he said. “They should help cover the costs of that pollution so taxpayers don’t have to.”