



ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

NEWS

April 29, 1977

Volume III, NO. 6

"BOTTLE BILL" PASSES ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE WITH A 10-4 VOTE!
(READ ALL ABOUT IT ON PAGE 3)

ENERGY PLANNING IN ILLINOIS

There is still time for you to attend IEC's workshop on Energy Planning in Illinois. Plan to join us for the latest scoop on what the various agencies of government are proposing.

We have planned to have the workshop adjourn at 3:30 to allow you time to visit your legislators. This would be a good opportunity to talk to them about the bottle bill and other legislation you are concerned about.

The program will cover most aspects of energy planning in Illinois and you will have an opportunity to meet with and question the people responsible for making policy.

The morning program includes Ernest Dunwoody and Bruce Green from the Division of Energy who will discuss the State's proposals for energy conservation and solar energy. Also Rep. Joseph Luco will discuss a plan supported by the Energy Resources Commission to reorganize all the energy and environmental agencies into a Natural Resources Commission.

At noon, William Shilling, Governor Thompson's assistant on energy, will discuss the Governor's program. The afternoon program will concentrate on aspects of coal development. Jake Dumelle of the Pollution Control Board will address the impact of coal development on air pollution. Dr. James Hartnett, public member of the Energy Resources

commission will discuss coal development in general and Mr. Remo Castrale will speak on some of the legislation concerning coal mine subsidence. Mr. Castrale is Superintendent of Schools in Johnston City where two high schools were seriously damaged by mine subsidence. He has been working with legislators on this problem.

Remember! May 4th at 9:00 a.m., St. Nicholas hotel, Springfield. Lunch is \$3.00.

MORATORIUM ON STRIP MINING?

As we are typing this newsletter, the U.S. Congress is debating the Federal Strip mining Bill. One of the items of debate is an amendment to put a five year moratorium on the strip mining of prime agricultural lands. Groups in Illinois have been working very hard for such an amendment. It is too late to write to your representative, but the issue will be debated in the Senate next week. Write to Senator Percy and Senator Stevenson urging them to support such an amendment.

WE NEED PEOPLE IN EVERY DISTRICT WORKING ON THE BOTTLE BILL. PLEASE CONTACT IEC IF YOU CAN HELP. IF YOU LIVE IN THE CHICAGO AREA CONTACT THE CHICAGO OFFICE OTHERS CONTACT THE SPRINGFIELD OFFICE. WE NOW HAVE MORE COPIES OF "POINT OF NO RETURNS" AVAILABLE. WE HAVE AN EXCELLENT 15 MINUTE SLIDE SHOW AND BUMPER STICKERS. (see page 4).

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CORRIDOR PARK PROPOSED FOR MIDDLE FORK

The Committee on the Middle Fork of the Vermilion River has released its plans for a natural river park which calls for annexation of a narrow 12-mile corridor to Kickapoo State Park.

The Committee's plan is a bare-bones, economical course of action that should return well over \$1 million to the State treasury. About 1,500 acres of agricultural land would be returned to private ownership. A new campground would be added at the north end of the 2,500-acre corridor, but other major developments would be confined to the existing Kickapoo State Park. However, several picnic-access areas would be opened near the bridges in the 2,500-acre corridor. Several high-quality prairies and woodlands would be dedicated as state Nature Preserves, and an archaeological site of national significance could be opened to the public. The plan would be the first of its kind in the state, and would open one of Illinois' finest rivers for public enjoyment.

Two years ago the Department of Conservation developed a more costly park design that included additional campgrounds and trails. The Committee believes these more elaborate features can wait until the State's financial condition improves, or federal funds become available.

The Committee is concerned about Director Kenney's statement that his plan calls for "acquiring a good deal more land," and his silence on the issue of returning some of the State's land to private ownership. The Committee advocates returning as much agricultural land as possible to private enterprise while preserving the natural character of the Middle Fork River for the enjoyment of the citizens of Illinois and Vermilion County. During the campaign, Governor Thompson said, "Some of the land that has been bought can be resold on the private market." The Committee feels that its plan is consistent with the Governor's campaign statements and economical enough to merit his support.

OVERVIEW OF MIDDLE FORK RIVER CORRIDOR PARK PROPOSAL

This proposal outlines an economical river corridor park development along the Middle Fork of the Vermilion River. It is a plan for disposition of the 4,000 acres of state-owned land in the river valley. The plan calls for:

1. A 2,500 acre corridor to be annexed to Kickapoo State Park extending north about 15 river miles to a point near Selscer Ford.
2. Sale of about 1,500 acres of state-owned farmland, with original owners offered the right of first refusal. Sales should yield about one or two million dollars in revenues for the State of Illinois.
3. Consolidation of Vermilion County Conservation District holdings.
4. Consideration of the Middle Fork for the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, and dedication of four Illinois State Nature Preserves in the corridor. Habitats of rare and endangered species of plants and animals would be protected.
5. Returning virtually all cropland in the area to production as soon as possible.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The river corridor would be managed as a unit with Kickapoo State Park. Recreational opportunities provided in the river valley would be added to those included in the present master plan for the State Park. The expanded park would contain 32 ponds, 18 miles of river, and a wide variety of terrain.

BOTTLE BILL WINS IN COMMITTEE

The House Committee on Environment, Energy and Natural Resources passed the bottle bill by a vote of 10 to 4 after a "stormy session" on April 22. Until recently, it has been thought that bottle bills would be impossible to pass in an industrial state because of the ferocity of the industrial lobby but the passage of the Michigan bill by referendum last November broke the ice and two weeks ago a similar bill passed the house in Connecticut. The Chicago Sun-Times, Daily News, and Tribune, as well as many other newspapers, organizations, and local governments around the state have endorsed the Illinois Beverage Container Act (HB 730) sponsored by Rep. Dan Pierce, Highland Park.

Much political work has been done by IEC and other organizations to make the bottle bill a powerful issue in the districts of the members of the committee. Some representatives spoke of receiving hundreds of letters. Rep. Boucek, in a brief speech explaining his vote reported getting 40 phone calls from his constituents on the Sunday before the vote while he was trying to cut his lawn. He said he enjoyed them, believe it or not. Even so, going into the committee we could count only nine sure votes and ten of the 18 votes were needed to win.

To make matters worse, one of the promised votes was from Jack Williams (D-5). Although Williams had promised a good number of his constituents that he would vote for the bottle bill, he left the House chamber during the debate and when the crucial time for the vote came, he was nowhere to be found. As the vote progressed, we had at least ten people combing the Capitol for him, unsuccessfully. Then, at the last minute, the farm vote came through and clinched the victory (Representatives Hart and McMaster). Farmers and environmentalists have often been on the opposite sides of issues in the past, but in Michigan and Vermont farm organizations played a major role in passing deposit legislation and they also played that role here on April 22.

The final vote was:

<u>Aye</u>	10	(Boucek, Kelly, Getty, Bowman, Antonovych, Meyer, Pierce, Reed, McMaster, Hart) Be sure to write and thank your representative for voting "Aye"
<u>No</u>	4	(MacDonald, Dawson, Bartulis, Flynn)
<u>"Present"</u>	2	(Van Dwyne, Geo-Karis)
<u>"Absent"</u>	2	(Farley, Williams)

As usual, the container industry had shipped in a great number of workers to pack the hearing and Chairman Flynn had to quiet them down from time to time but when the vote was announced, we shrinking-violet environmentalists managed to make more noise than they ever did.

The House Floor vote is scheduled for May 21. Much work needs to be done before that date to convince the rest of the legislators to vote for this bill. You can help. Plan to devote some time in the next three weeks to help us win!

BOTTLE BILL DEADLINE — MAY 21

ACTIVISTS NEEDED IN EVERY DISTRICT

Bottle bill work up to now has been largely confined to districts with committee members. Now we have only three weeks to mobilize public opinion enough to see that the full house confirms its committee's recommendation.

Most of what has to be done is quite straightforward. The vast majority of people support the bill, but the vast majority won't write letters unless we find ways to spur them on. Many organizations would be willing to endorse the bill and write official letters to their representatives, but they won't unless someone suggests it. Newspapers will print letters to the editors, but not until someone writes them. May 21st will be here soon so the time to act is now. Let's not lose this momentum. Act Now.

SPECIFIC THINGS TO DO

A. Know Your District

- Get your legislators' names, home addresses, telephone numbers, and find out their political position in general. (Call IEC office)
- Make up lists of all local newspapers and all community groups in the area.
- Find out what local governments have their own environmental agencies.
- Get a list of all present supporters (call IEC) of the bill and add to it as we gain new supporters.

B. Get Local Groups to Support the Bill

See that all local community groups and relevant government agencies are contacted and asked if they would like to see our slide show or have written material about the bill. Try to use members of these groups or agencies for information distribution. If these groups decide to support the bill, ask them to send letters of support to their legislators.

C. Create Local Publicity

See that local leaders or groups write letters to the editor of local papers supporting the bill. Work on getting local papers to endorse the bill.

D. Focus on Legislators

Get people to call their legislators at home about the bill, especially local leaders or people who know the legislators. Calls have great impact. Next, get as many individuals in the district as possible to write their legislators. Write:

Representative _____
State Office Building
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Letters should be brief, should urge support of HB-730, and should include a line or two of personal experience if possible.

E. Keep in Touch with Illinois Environmental Council Offices

Chicago Office (312) 663-0863, Springfield Office (217) 544-5954
Report successes, failures, bright ideas, any media attention (pro or con, include Letters to the Editor), and especially, any feedback from your Legislators.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

These have been a frantic two weeks for the Legislature and IEC Staff. Because of House and Senate deadlines, most of our bills have been heard during this time. Committees are meeting from early morning to night trying to get through the great mass of legislation in front of them before the deadline. For the most part the news on the environmental front has been good. Of course, the major victory was getting the "bottle bill" out of committee on Friday, April 22. Following are some of the other actions that we are very pleased about.

ROCK ISLAND TRAIL SALE BILL DEFEATED

Friday, April 22, the House Environment Committee voted on HB 1544 which would have required the Department of Conservation to sell the Rock Island Trail at public auction. That land was donated to the State of Illinois by the Forest Park Foundation for use as a hiking and bicycle trail. The bill was strongly opposed by the Illinois Environmental Council and the many groups in the Peoria area who have worked so hard over the years to get the bike and hiking trail established.

HB 1544 was originally introduced by Rep. Sumner whose husband owns land adjacent to the trail. She has been the leader in the fight to stop trail construction. Proponents of the trail challenged the propriety of Mrs. Sumner's introduction of legislation which could result in financial benefit to her. The issue became so embarrassing that she withdrew from the bill's sponsorship after the Peoria paper suggested that if she were going to pursue private interests she should consider resigning from the General Assembly. However, she did testify at the hearing making a virulent attack on the Sierra Club which had brought up the conflict of interest question.

Representatives of the Sierra Club did not have an opportunity to respond to that charge. However, the Environment Committee conclusively defeated the bill. We were particularly pleased with testimony from the Director of the Department of Conservation, David Kenney. Dr. Kenney indicated that he would like to try to work out some sort of solution for the trail. He is planning to bring the opponents and proponents together and is considering opening one section of the trail on a trial basis. He opposed HB 1544 on the grounds that it would close off that option.

LAND RESOURCES MANAGEMENT STUDY COMMISSION APPROVED IN COMMITTEE

A commission to be composed of 10 legislative members and 8 public members to study various aspects of land use policy and to report its findings to the general assembly in two years passed the House Environment Committee Tuesday, April 26. The bill (HB 766) is identical to one introduced by Rep. Mugalian two years ago. It has had strong backing from IEC. Last time the bill passed the House but was given to an unfriendly Senator for sponsorship and died. We hope it will fair better this year.

While we generally oppose the creation of new commissions, the Illinois legislature is so hesitant to act in the area of land management and the problems are so serious that the establishment of a study commission seems to be a necessary first step.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION (Continued)

The conflict between various interests for Illinois land is great. Agriculture, Coal, Industry, Housing, highways, and recreation all want the land and the State of Illinois has NO mechanism to plan for what use is in the best interest of the citizens of the State now and for the future. Establishment of a commission to study land resource management in Illinois is an important step in developing such a mechanism.

WETLANDS BILL CLEARS HOUSE COMMITTEE WITH VOTES TO SPARE

Rep. Glenn Schneider (D-41) was successful in getting a new version of the "Scenic Rivers" or "Wetlands Bill" (HB 1718) so dear to the heart of conservationists in Illinois through the House Environment Committee on Tuesday of this week. The bill was drafted by the Chicago Council of Lawyers Environmental Law Committee. It requires the Illinois Department of Conservation to inventory and study the system of Illinois waterways and recommend segments for inclusion in the system. Based on previous studies, 20 areas are designated as initial segments of the system. IEC is planning to meet with the sponsors of the bill to discuss the provisions and to provide input on past work done on wetland bills.

BILL TO REDUCE EPA AUTHORITY DEFEATED

HB 923 which would have prohibited the Pollution Control Board or the Environmental Protection Agency from imposing any standards or conditions more stringent than those imposed by the federal government was soundly defeated in the House Environment Committee. The bill was particularly dangerous because there are a number of areas such as solid waste and noise where there are no clear federal standards.

NATURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION ACT

This bill (SB 882) was put in a subcommittee by the House Agricultural Committee. The bill clarified and defines the duties of the Nature Preserves Commission and provides for a system of dedicated nature preserves and reserve areas, for a register of natural and reserve areas, and for the control and management of dedicated and registered areas. It is a very long bill and the committee felt that neither they nor their staff had had adequate time to study the bill. It was put into an active subcommittee which will work on the bill over the summer. IEC is strongly in support of this bill and will be working with the subcommittee to make sure that it will be considered in the fall.

ILLINOIS NUCLEAR POWER EVALUATION ACT

On a motion by Representative Kelly and a unanimous vote of the committee, HB 764 which would create the Nuclear Power Evaluation Committee to study the effects of light-water fission-fueled power generation facilities was put in study committee. This bill would ban all new construction of nuclear power plants for a five-year period after the effective date of the Act. By moving the bill to study committee, it is kept alive for further consideration.

ENVIRONMENTAL CALENDAR

- May 4, 1977 Illinois Environmental Council Workshop. Energy Planning Illinois 9:00 a.m. to 3:30. Registration fee \$3.00 Includes lunch. St. Nicholas Hotel, Springfield. Drop-ins accepted.
- May 4, 1977 7:30 p.m. Great Lakes Chapter, Sierra Club. Chicago Academy of Sciences, 2001 North Clark Street. "Alaska's National Interest Land".
- May 12, 1977 Resource Mobilization Conference. 210 South East Street, Bloomington 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- May 5, 12, 19, 26. Meetings on Executive Branch Reorganization sponsored by the Governor's Office and League of Women Voters, in Chicago, Wheaton, Springfield, and Peoria. Further meetings in June. For information contact: Joan Schilf, 160 N. LaSalle, St. Chicago, Il. 60601 (312) 793-3757. Testimony Welcome.
- June 28, 29, 1977 - USEPA is sponsoring a regional seminar on Resource Recovery. Meeting will be at the Hyatt Regency, Chicago, and limited to first 250. Contact: EPA "Resource Recovery", P.O. Box 17413, Dulles International Airport, Washington, D.C. 20041 (703) 471-6180.

ILLINOIS EPA NEWS

"No relaxation of existing regulations will be necessary to burn an expected 14 million more tons of Illinois coal by 1985" IEPA Director Leo Eisel said recently at a Statewide Policy Advisory Committee meeting for clean water planning in Springfield. "There is enough flexibility in the present regulations to allow industry to step up production." However, new regulations for controlling water pollutants from coal mining areas may be developed in IEPA's planning program to control water pollutants from broad land areas.

These statements were consistent with another IEPA Report which examines Coal Use In Illinois. That report indicated that Illinois coal consumption by Major Illinois utilities will increase almost 50 percent in the next eight years. The report, "Illinois Coal and Illinois Environment: A Citizen Guide to Better Understanding," is available free from the Office of Public Affairs, IEPA, 2200 Churchill Road, Springfield, Il. 62706.

In light of President Carter's program to turn the spotlight on the use of coal, this report provides an interesting perspective. "There is a great deal of misinformation circulating throughout the state about Illinois coal burning regulations," said Patrick Lynch, manager, Division of Air Pollution Control, IEPA. "If you listen to only coal special interest groups, you might think there is no coal being burned in Illinois." "Illinois utilities alone burn over 24 million tons of Illinois coal a year, and by the mid-1980's that amount will increase almost 50%. In fact, every coal fired Illinois power plant in existence before 1972 outside of Chicago, Peoria and East St. Louis burns Illinois coal. The largest coal-fired power plant in these three metropolitan areas, burns Illinois coal, as will every new coal-fired plant except one scheduled to be built in the next eight years."

We recommend writing for a copy of this free report to bring yourself up-to-date on Illinois coal use.

In This Issue:

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STAFF WORKING FOR IMPROVED ENVIRONMENTAL
LEGISLATION AND POLICY IN ILLINOIS

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MIDDLE FORK CORRIDOR PARK (page 2)

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