



STATE OF ILLINOIS  
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Letter-to-the-Editor  
(432 words)

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Dear Editor,

Next week, the Illinois General Assembly will consider legislation to require government agencies to inform residents of any toxic substances in their water or soil. One might think our government is looking out for us already, but that hasn't been the case.

Just ask Jana Bendik.

This brave, previously healthy Downers Grove teenager was diagnosed with non-Hodgkins lymphoma, a disease linked to toxic chemicals. For years, Jana cooked with, washed in and drank poisoned water. This tragedy is compounded by the awful fact that state government bureaucrats knew for 10 years about the toxic hazard in Bendik's water, but never told her family.

A recent investigation showed that hidden toxins, hazardous materials and medical waste products often seep into groundwater without local residents knowing about it. And there are countless toxic "hot zones" across Illinois in unsuspecting residents' backyards.

That would change, though, under the proposed "Toxic Chemical Disclosure Act" (House Bill 290), the top environmental reform bill facing the General Assembly this session.

Sponsored by Rep. John Fritchey (D-Chicago), this reform would require the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to use individualized notices, an easy-to-use online database and newspaper announcements to warn citizens living within 2,500 feet of hazardous waste and toxic contaminants of their proximity to the deadly substances. Much of this information is already available to the public, but government bureaucrats have dropped the ball in getting the information out to those who need it most.

Under our Illinois Constitution, the people of our state have the right to live in a "healthful environment". The Toxic Chemical Disclosure Act is a commonsense way to help us carry out this fundamental constitutional mandate. No resident would be left in the dark about the poisons in their midst again.

If you agree in our fundamental right to know when there are deadly contaminants in the water we drink, cook with or bathe in, or in the soil we send our children to play in, contact your state legislators today and urge a "yes" vote on HB 290, the Toxic Chemical Disclosure Act.

Sincerely,

Pat Quinn  
Illinois Lieutenant Governor