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August 7, 2026
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor Pritzker Signs Legislation Insulating Illinois from Trump Administration's Anti-Environment Agenda

New laws make Illinois independent from federal environmental rollbacks, further protect Illinoisans from pollution, and strengthens environmental equality

CHICAGO – Governor JB Pritzker signed three bills (HB 5070, SB 3772 and HB 4418) that protect Illinoisans from the legacy of toxic pollution and insulate the state from some of the worst impacts of the Trump administration's federal environmental policy rollbacks. Environmental and community advocates across the state are celebrating the new laws as a set of historic "firsts" that will result in cleaner air and water and improved public health across the state.

"Access to clean air and safe drinking water is not a luxury, but a basic human right – and providing this means prioritizing people over big polluters," **said Governor JB Pritzker**. "While the Trump administration continues to roll back critical environmental protections, Illinois takes another step forward to preserve the health and well-being of all residents."

"Each of these bills further strengthen the mission of the Illinois EPA and provide the necessary tools to implement our goals," **said Illinois EPA Director James Jennings**. "Thanks to the work of the Illinois General Assembly and Governor Pritzker, these laws will ensure Illinois maintains its strong environmental protections that are legally supported and based on sound science."

As Trump Weakens Environmental Protections, Illinois Strengthens Them

The Trump administration continues to march forward with its anti-environment agenda, dismantling bedrock environmental protections, including [rescinding](#) the U.S. EPA's greenhouse gas endangerment finding, [weakening](#) vehicle emissions standards, [accelerating](#) fossil fuel permitting and, most recently, [curtailing](#) clean water protections, all in an increasingly [warming world](#).

As the federal government aggressively moves to weaken federal environmental protections, Illinois is instead strengthening them. In signing HB 5070, Gov. Pritzker, his Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the General Assembly have, for the first time, ended the state's automatic adoption of federal environmental rules when such rollbacks would weaken existing state protections.

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Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

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“The Trump administration has repeatedly moved to prioritize big polluters at the expense of our health and wellbeing, but with the enactment of HB 5070, we’ve made it much harder for him to pull us backward,” said the bill’s chief house sponsor, **State Representative Ann Williams**.

The Trump administration recently announced its intention to [roll back](#) protective national drinking water standards for toxic Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances, known as PFAS, in community water supplies. Found in drinking water, wildlife, and even the human bloodstreams, these “forever chemicals” are linked to cancer, immune system suppression, and developmental harms. HB 5070 ensures that Illinois will keep its nationally leading, science-based, state-level PFAS standards in place, despite a federal standards rollback.

“I am extremely proud of our state, our Illinois EPA and our Governor for stepping up to inoculate Illinoisans from some of the worst impacts of the Trump administration’s anti-environment agenda,” said HB 5070’s chief Senate sponsor, **State Senator Laura Ellman**. “The U.S. EPA may cater to Big Polluters, but in Illinois, we’ve chosen a path grounded in science, public health and the understanding that clean air and clean water keep life more affordable for Illinoisans.”

HB 5070 prohibits the use of expedited rulemaking processes before the Board to adopt any new federal standards that are less stringent than Illinois’s existing clean air, clean water, safe drinking water, and hazardous waste standards. This will ensure Illinois maintains its strong environmental protections that are legally supported and based on sound science, even as the federal government celebrates rolling those same standards back.

Historic Environmental Justice Protections in Illinois’ Most Polluted Neighborhoods

By enacting SB 3772, Gov. Pritzker and the Illinois General Assembly have further solidified Illinois’ legacy as the home of the Environmental Justice (EJ) movement. SB 3772 codifies, for the first time in Illinois law, a legal framework for addressing the cumulative impact of industrial air pollution in Illinois’ Environmental Justice communities. The Illinois EPA will have greater air permitting authority to protect environmental justice communities, now defined by data analysis pinpointing low-income communities of color with historically disproportionately high concentrations of polluting industries, against increasingly toxic accumulations of air pollution. Researchers estimate that air pollution contributes to about five percent of premature deaths in environmental justice communities.

“For too long in Illinois, the worst polluters have been allowed to turn low-income communities of color into sacrifice zones for their pollution, but the enactment of SB 3772 begins to change that,” said the bill’s **Chief House Sponsor, State Rep. Lilian Jimenez**. “I am so proud of this step toward righting decades of environmental racism in our state; by defining ‘Environmental Justice communities’ in statute, we can be data-driven and precise in how we consider multiple pollution indicators and demographic factors in determining an overall cumulative pollution burden.”

The new Illinois law will also require a cumulative impact analysis assessing all existing air pollution sources, sensitive populations, and other factors that increase community vulnerability to the overall

effect of newly proposed polluting projects seeking permits. An assessment indicating disproportionately adverse pollution impacts in an EJ community would require the Illinois EPA to consider changes prior to granting new permits, whether through additional modeling, stronger permit conditions, increased inspections, or prioritizing beneficial funding for the impacted community. The agency can now, for the first time, also consider an applicant's past compliance and violation history, require stronger community outreach, and encourage the use of pollution prevention technologies.

"The Illinois Constitution makes it clear that all residents have the right to a healthful environment, meaning no communities in the state should be forced to bear the disproportionate and adverse weight that comes with air pollution," said **State Senator Celina Villanueva**. "Unfortunately, we know low-income, minority and immigrant communities are historically the ones who carry this burden and live with the effects of pollution exposure, and the neighborhoods I represent, where asthma rates affect children at two to three times the state average, have lived with this unjust reality for far too long. This law recognizes that enough is enough and that our communities and families deserve better."

SB 3772 applies to the two largest categories of air permits, the Clean Air Act Permit Program (CAAPP) permits and Federally Enforceable State Operating Permits (FESOPs), and enhances their protections by allowing for improved air monitoring, fugitive dust controls, operational limits, increased testing, and odor control and monitoring.

"We are extremely grateful for the leadership of Gov. JB Pritzker's office and to the team from the Illinois EPA for championing this historic environmental justice win and helping us finally get it across the finish line," said **Jen Walling, CEO of the Illinois Environmental Council**. "As our EJ leaders have said, this is a significant and meaningful step forward for communities who simply want clean air to breathe, and our work to secure that basic human right continues."

Leading the Great Lakes States in Tackling Plastic Pollution to Protect Clean Water

With the Governor's signature of HB 4418, Illinois state law will officially designate plastic pellets as a pollutant for the first time. In doing so, Illinois will become the first of the Great Lakes states to hold producers of industrial plastic pellets accountable for spills of these toxic pellets into our waterways.

HB 4418 defines pre-production plastic pellets as a pollutant and directs the Illinois EPA to develop and implement stormwater pollution controls that specifically target plastic pellets. That means polluters would be required to have a plan to keep plastic pellets out of our waters, protecting wildlife and our drinking water sources from these toxic microplastics.

"Clean water is one of Illinois' most valuable resources, and protecting it means addressing pollution before it reaches our rivers and lakes," said bill chief House sponsor, **State Representative Joyce Mason**. "Plastic pellets may be small, but their impact on our environment, wildlife, and public health is significant. By recognizing these industrial plastic pellets as a pollutant and requiring commonsense prevention measures, Illinois is taking a proactive step to reduce plastic pollution and safeguard the Great Lakes and our waterways for future generations."

Plastic pollution adversely affects clean water, wildlife, and public health. An estimated 22 million pounds of plastic waste ends up in the Great Lakes each year, and [86% of litter collected on Great Lakes beaches is plastic](#). A [recent report](#) found microplastics in 100% of tested waterways across Illinois.

“This new law ensures that manufacturers and transporters take responsibility for preventing these pellets from entering our waterways in the first place,” said the bill’s chief Senate Sponsor, **State Senator Julie Morrison**. “Illinois is setting a strong example for the Great Lakes region by putting practical protections in place that will help keep our drinking water cleaner, protect wildlife, and reduce plastic pollution at its source.”

These pre-production plastic pellets, sometimes referred to as “nurdles,” are the building blocks of plastics manufacturing. They are a recurring source of plastic pollution in the environment because they get [dumped or spilled](#) from stormwater runoff from plastic factories and during transportation between facilities.

“We applaud Illinois for being the first Great Lakes state to hold producers and transporters of industrial plastic pellets accountable for spills that pollute our waters,” said **Andrea Densham, Director of Regional Government Affairs at the Alliance for the Great Lakes**. “With the legislative leadership of Senator Morrison and Representative Mason and Gov. Pritzker’s signature, polluters will be required to have a plan to keep plastic pellets out of our waters, protecting wildlife and our drinking water sources from these toxic microplastics.”

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