



ILLINOIS EPA *Impact*

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Message from

ACTING DIRECTOR JAMES JENNINGS



Each month, I am reminded how much valuable work continues to occur at the Agency, sometimes quietly and behind the scenes. As in the past, this newsletter is one avenue to highlight, in detail, the important progress our various teams are making on projects that are critical to the state's health and well-being. In addition to updates related to our state's water quality, electric vehicle, and household hazardous waste programs, I wanted to share a few updates on legislative activities that impact our day-to-day work.

- **State Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Proposal:** Last month, Governor Pritzker delivered his budget address outlining the spending requests for the state fiscal year that will begin in July. Overall, our budget outlook is positive. We have an operations budget proposal of \$663.5 million, which includes a modest increase from this year, and will be used to cover critical activities like employee salaries and benefits. The budget also includes some notable new spending, including \$5 million to expand our direct investments in brownfields redevelopment, as well as \$38 million for a variety of projects related to the State's settlement with Monsanto. Additionally, our proposed budget includes \$6.7 billion in capital support. These funds will help us advance lead service line removals, offer support for communities still lacking sewer access, catalyze additional drinking water and waste water system modernization, and allow us to continue to invest in recycling and composting markets. The primary takeaway from the proposed budget is that we are on sound programmatic ground and will continue to grow as we are able.
- **Legislative Session Update:** We are into the third month of the Spring 2026 legislative session, which features several Agency initiatives. Our agenda for this year focuses on two primary themes: safeguarding state law from federal overreach and facilitating community revitalization. We authored three bills to help us fortify state environmental law from federal rollbacks. These include a bill that would expressly clarify that the state is not required to blindly adopt weakened federal standards into state law, one that would enable the Agency to regulate coal combustion residual management units that are not currently accommodated under state law and which may be subject to weakened federal oversight, and a bill solidifying the requirements to ensure PFAS sampling and reporting criteria are included in water discharge permits. Our restoration agenda includes a series of bills impacting our land programs that are intended to ensure protective long-term stewardship of closed landfills, prevent future exposure to covered waste, expand opportunities to support remediation of fuel tank releases, and finance additional brownfields redevelopment using existing state resources.



HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION EVENTS

Illinois EPA recently announced seven spring Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) one-day collection events scheduled over the upcoming months. These collection events are coordinated by Illinois EPA and local co-sponsors to provide residents with a free opportunity to safely dispose of unused or leftover hazardous products that are common in households. One-day HHW collections are open to all Illinois residents and operate from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on the day of the event; however, pre-registration is required for all spring 2026 collection events. A complete list of events, includes wastes that are and are not accepted, is available on the [Illinois EPA website](#).

ILLINOIS ELECTRIC VEHICLE REBATE PROGRAM EXTENDED TO MAY 31, 2026

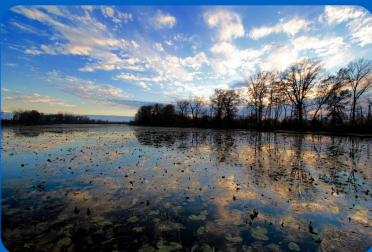
Illinois EPA has extended the initial application cycle deadline of the popular Electric Vehicle (EV) Rebate Program from January 31, 2026 to May 31, 2026. Low income applicants will continue to be prioritized as specified in the program requirements, which are available on the [EV Rebate Program webpage](#). Updated forms and instructions to submit a rebate application are also currently available on the webpage.

NUTRIENT LOSS REDUCTION STRATEGY PROGRESS AND NEW DATA PORTAL

The Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy (NLRS), first released in July 2015, is the result of a collaboration of public and private partners that provides a framework to reduce nutrient pollution and its negative impacts locally and downstream by recommending practical, research-based practices. NLRS achievements over the past decade include:

- Wastewater treatment facilities have surpassed their phosphorus reduction goal.
- More funding has been made available for agricultural practices that improve water quality and reduce soil loss.
- Nitrate carried by Illinois rivers has shown a long-term decline; and
- A new NLRS online data portal has been launched to provide up-to-date nutrient loss information directly to partners and the public.

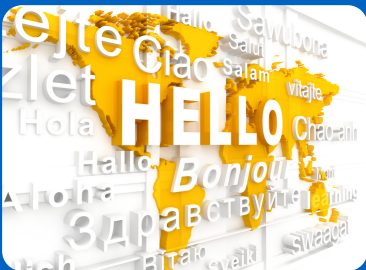
The [new NLRS portal](#) preserves the original structure and logic of NLRS reporting while making information easier to access, explore, and use. It integrates historical context with annual updates, offers more than 150 downloadable charts, maps, and data files, and provides new tools to view long-term nutrient, program, and partner information across the state.





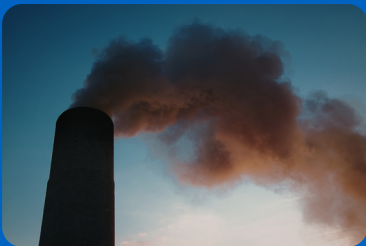
STATE ACTIONS TARGETING PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES (PFAS)

Illinois EPA strives to keep residents informed on the latest developments with regard to addressing PFAS in our environment. In February 2026, the Illinois Pollution Control Board published a final opinion and order for amendments to Illinois drinking water regulations. The amendments add five PFAS individual U.S. EPA Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for PFOA, PFOS, PFHxS, PFNA, and HFPO-DA, and a target hazard index MCL for the mixture of two or more of PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA, and PFBS to Illinois drinking water regulations. These standards are guided by the best available science and are among the most protective in the nation. An MCL is the maximum amount of a specific substance allowed in drinking water with no known or anticipated adverse effects on human health. Visit our [PFAS webpage](#) for additional information including ways to reduce exposure to PFAS chemicals.



REVISED LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

The Illinois EPA's 2026 Revised Language Access Plan (LAP) aims to provide guidance to Agency staff and establish a roadmap to support meaningful access to the Agency's services, programs, and opportunities for limited English proficient (LEP) individuals. In Illinois, an estimated 1 million residents speak a language other than English at home. The Language Access Plan also seeks to align the Agency's efforts and bring Illinois EPA into compliance with the Illinois Language Equity and Access Act (Public Act 103-0723) of 2024, the Illinois Civil Rights Act of 2003, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and other applicable federal and state standards and guidelines. Illinois EPA provides free language services to LEP individuals, such as qualified interpreters and information written in other languages.



SMOKE SCHOOL

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency will offer a course in the Evaluation of Visible Emissions on Wednesday, April 22 and Thursday, April 23, 2026. Class begins at 9:00 a.m. each morning with registration beginning at approximately 8:00 a.m.

A lecture session will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 21st, which is open to all attendees, but required for initial certification. The lecture will include discussion of visible emissions and the finer points of reading opacity. Details are available at on the session, including a registration form, which must be completed prior to April 17, 2026, are available on the Agency's [website](#).





OPERATOR CERTIFICATION EXAMINATIONS

The Illinois EPA operates the Drinking Water Operator Certification and Wastewater Operator Certification Programs to ensure individuals are certified as competent to perform duties without endangering public health or the environment. Each program offers a full Exam schedule for 2026. The [Drinking Water Operator Certification Examination Schedule](#) indicates exams run from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The [Wastewater Operator Certification Schedule](#) includes exams that run from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Both exams are offered at multiple locations throughout the state.



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

New funding opportunities for energy related projects were recently announced through the Resilience Energy for Wastewater Infrastructure (REWI) Grant Program and the Public Water Supply Energy Efficiency (PWSEE) Grant Program. The REWI Grant Program invests in resilient infrastructure, not only to extend the life of wastewater facilities, but also to reduce operational costs and enhance community well-being, especially during severe weather events. The PWSEE program enables upgrades such as lighting and control systems, pump or drive replacements, and HVAC modifications. All current funding opportunities can be viewed on our [Grants and Loans webpage](#).



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In 2025, Illinois EPA welcomed 136 new employees to the Agency. Our current headcount stands at 813 employees, a significant increase from past years. Illinois EPA has a variety of technical and professional staff positions, including specialists, geologists, engineers, biologists, chemists, as well as positions involved with legal and administrative services. Current postings are available [online](#).





ACCESSING ILLINOIS EPA RECORDS

Illinois EPA receives thousands of requests for records each year. In an effort to provide access to highly sought Agency records, we offer the online [Document Explorer](#) tool making certain documents available for viewing and downloading. For documents that are not available through the online tool, individuals may submit a [Freedom of Information Request](#).



POLLUTION COMPLAINTS

Illinois EPA is committed to responding to complaints as quickly as possible. The quickest and easiest way to submit a complaint to Illinois EPA is through the [online complaint form](#). Individuals can also contact the closest [Illinois EPA Regional Office](#). To report an environmental emergency, please contact the Illinois Emergency Management Agency at 800-782-7860.

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