

Mahomet Aquifer Protection Task Force

September 14, 2018

c/o Barb Lieberoff, Office of Community Relations
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
1021 North Grand Avenue East
Springfield, Illinois 62702

Dear Mahomet Aquifer Protection Task Force Members:

DeWitt County firmly supports the work of the Mahomet Aquifer Protection Task Force, and is well represented by Teresa Barnett, Director of Government Affairs, DeWitt County Emergency Management Agency. With this letter, I would like to comment on what I believe should, or should not be included in the Task Force's final report.

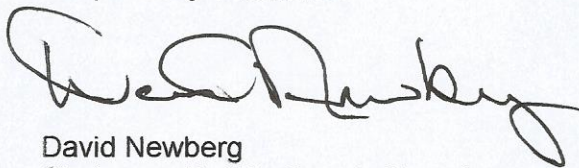
I agree with the need for improved cooperative efforts between the various stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of the Mahomet Aquifer. DeWitt County and our neighbor Piatt County, have long supported the Mahomet Valley Water Authority, which was formed under the Water Authorities Act (70 ILCS 3715). The WWA's resources are somewhat limited, and could possibly be enhanced through inter-governmental agreements, establishment of an oversight organization or other means to improve cooperation and to obtain additional resources. However, an oversight organization, if established, should not be granted the authority to establish regulations, issue permits, or make land use or taxation/user fee decisions. It is important that local zoning and other land use decisions continue to be made by the individual counties and/or municipalities, and that the authority to impose taxes and user fees remain with duly elected officials.

Secondly, I strongly support additional scientific studies to better understand how much water can be safely withdrawn from different areas of the Mahomet Aquifer, and what areas may be potentially vulnerable to contamination from human activities or natural sources. Such well supported scientific knowledge can be of great help to guide local zoning and other land use decisions.

Lastly, lists of certain types of commercial, industrial, or chemical application activities (or "threats") are not particularly useful, can never be fully comprehensive, and can possibly divert attention from emerging environmental issues. Additionally, such lists tend to sour cooperation between the various stakeholders and, therefore, I believe should not be included in the report. We should instead support the Illinois EPA with its well-established and ongoing efforts, and ensure that it has sufficient resources to perform its mission well.

You have all worked hard these past several months. Thank you for your service.

Respectfully submitted:



David Newberg
Chairman, DeWitt County Board