



# *NEWS RELEASE*

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## **Illinois EPA to Conduct Targeted Canvassing of Homes Following Potential Groundwater Impact from Natural Gas Leak Near Mahomet Aquifer** *Water Samples to be Collected from Private Wells*

SPRINGFIELD —Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Director Alec Messina announced the Illinois EPA will begin canvassing homes in rural Mahomet on October 30, 2017. The canvassing is following reports of a natural gas leak from a well owned by Peoples Gas and located in the Manlove Field natural gas storage facility. The gas leak, located below the Mahomet Aquifer, appears to have impacted groundwater, and the canvassing will aid in identifying private wells that may have been affected. Illinois EPA staff will collect water samples from the targeted private wells for analysis.

“Countless residents rely on groundwater as a drinking water source, and the Mahomet Aquifer is one of our most vital sources,” said Director Messina. “This is an essential public resource and Illinois EPA will take the necessary steps to ensure it remains safe.”

Illinois EPA plans to collect water samples from 40 private wells, which will include the initial five private wells that were already tested and identified as contaminated by Peoples Gas. Though Illinois EPA does not regulate private wells, the independent sampling will provide additional information for residents and assist the Agency in identifying the extent of groundwater contamination resulting from the natural gas release.

“I appreciate the Illinois EPA consenting to my request to do their own testing of these wells,” State Sen. Chapin Rose (R-Mahomet) said. “This is an important first step in getting answers for my constituents who are dealing with natural gas in their water.”

Residents must consent to the collection of groundwater samples from private wells. There is no cost to the homeowners for the testing. All sample results will be provided to the homeowners once the results are available. If residents are not home during Illinois EPA canvassing, a door hanger will be left with additional information on how to contact the Agency.

As the permitting authority for well fields, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources first responded to the natural gas release with a violation notice to Peoples Gas. That case has since been referred to the Attorney General’s Office who recently filed a complaint and agreed interim order in Champaign County Circuit Court.

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