

Summary: Warehouse Pollution Reduction Act (WPRa)

Problem

Warehouses are pollution magnets. Across Illinois, 6,970 warehouses generate hundreds of thousands of polluting diesel trucks every day and create additional pollution from onsite activities — pollutants that each year cause hundreds of deaths and thousands of new childhood asthma cases and cost families billions in financial health burdens. As a result of the e-commerce boom, more communities than ever are trapped in warehouse pollution hotspots that harm the health of those who live, study, and work at or near these facilities — a disproportionate number of which are located in Hispanic/Latino, Black, and low-income communities.

The solution

The Illinois Warehouse Pollution Reduction Act uses a Clean Air Act mechanism called Indirect Source Review (ISR) to reduce air pollution generated by warehouses. It would require warehouses 30,000 square feet and up — a number that aligns with the Chicago Cumulative Impact Ordinance — to reduce pollution from trucking and other activities at the site. A warehouse ISR policy is already saving hundreds of lives and billions of dollars in Southern California and efforts are under way to pass similar policies in New York, New Jersey, California, and Colorado. In the face of the federal government's attacks on clean air protections, this policy is essential for protecting our health, our children, and our future.

Summary of key components in draft bill

- Pollution reduction: Requires warehouses 30,000 square feet and up to reduce pollution from warehouses activities — both from vehicles and onsite equipment, and consistent with the State's goals of achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and achieving or maintaining compliance with federal air quality standards — through actions including clean trucks, EV charging, solar energy, and local hiring, with 25% faster pollution reduction in overburdened communities.
- Reporting business information: Requires regulated facility operators to report warehouse information, including location, owner, truck traffic volume and classifications, and pollution reduction efforts — information that IEPA collects and makes public on a website.
- Construction permit: Requires new proposed facilities that could be regulated facilities to notify residents living within 900 ft and local electeds, participate in a public hearing, comply with green building standards, comply with setback requirements, demonstrate that facility will not violate federal clean air laws, and publish documents regarding permit applications; and makes permit approval contingent on adherence to these requirements.
- Warehouse setbacks: Requires regulated facilities that have a property line within 900 feet of a sensitive receptor (e.g. homes, schools, parks, EJ communities, hospitals) to be built such that truck bays are at least 1,000 ft from the property line of a sensitive receptor and take other steps to help protect sensitive communities.
- Air pollution modeling: Requires IEPA to draft, solicit public comment on, finalize, and then use an air quality modeling program that models and publicly reports key pollutants from each regulated facility, which will allow health impacts to be calculated.
- Fees: Allows IEPA to collect fees from permitting and reporting that ensure sufficient funding for development, implementation, maintenance, and enforcement of this policy.
- Violations: Allows IEPA to assess fines against regulated facility operators that violate the policy and affirms that any person who is harmed by violations can seek relief in court.