

Letter to the Governor –

We, the undersigned lawmakers representing Mahomet Aquifer communities, write in support of protecting the Mahomet Aquifer from the risk of contamination caused by injection of CO₂.

The Mahomet Aquifer is a source of drinking water below significant portions of East-Central Illinois, providing water for nearly 1 million Illinoisians. It is a designated Sole Source Aquifer (SSA), and according to the US Environmental Protection Agency “less than 50% of the population in the Mahomet Aquifer service area would be able to find an economically feasible alternate source of water should the proposed SSA become contaminated.”

If a leak of stored CO₂ occurs, the CO₂ would interact with drinking water in the aquifer to form carbonic acid, changing the water chemistry. The altered water chemistry can mobilize or release contaminants, such as heavy metals like arsenic, that would otherwise have been “dormant” and safe.

Damage to the Mahomet Aquifer by leaking CO₂ would be hard to detect quickly and even harder to remedy. It could directly impact human health before detection, particularly for those on private wells and if the CO₂ mobilizes contaminants that are not regularly screened by drinking water utilities. The 2016 People’s Gas leak of methane into the Mahomet Aquifer has taught us anything, it is that cleanup is long and only after significant enforcement from the Illinois EPA. It took five years to reach a consent order, and the impacted community members are on bottled water to this day.

This Assembly has repeatedly identified the Mahomet Aquifer as a critical resource for central Illinois and taken steps to protect it. We’re standing up for the aquifer again now.

As parties finalize adequate safeguards for our communities from CO₂ waste disposal, we urge the strongest possible protections for the Mahomet Aquifer, including a ban on injecting CO₂ waste through and under our sole source aquifer. The Mahomet is essential for our communities, and we cannot support legislation that puts it at risk.

Sincerely,

Senator David Koehler
46th District
Assistant Majority Leader

Senator Paul Faraci
52nd District

Senator Chapin Rose
51st District

Representative Carol Ammons
103rd District

Representative Dan Caulkins
88th District

Representative Sharon Chung
91st District
Representative Brandun Schweizer (R)
104th District

Representative Norine K. Hammond (R)
94th District

Representative Dennis Tipsword, Jr. (R)
105th District

Representative William E Hauter (R)
87th District

Representative Michael J. Coffey, Jr. (R)
95th District

Representative Wayne A Rosenthal (R)
108th District