

37. WATER WITHDRAWALS

We believe that the ability of a landowner to reasonably use water on or beneath his property is a right to be enjoyed. This right should not be taken without due process of law. Just compensation should be given to those regions or individuals whose ability to use the water is diminished.

We believe agricultural uses must receive a high priority in the allocation of water supplies. Consideration should be given to businesses or consumers which would feel an economic impact from water restrictions.

We believe it is the duty of all users to conserve water to avoid waste of a critical natural resource. Conservation programs should encourage use of water recycling where feasible. Industry should be encouraged to use recycled effluent water produced by local municipal wastewater treatment facilities in the production process.

We support:

1. The establishment of water authorities by referendum of affected property owners, for the purpose of managing the water resource. Water authorities should be established within aquifers or recharge lines and be governed by elected or appointed directors who are resident landowners representing the various water users in the district. Regulations, developed by authorities, should be based upon the availability of supply and needs and desires of affected property owners.
2. Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) should receive support to implement provisions of the Water Use Act to collect necessary data on water wells.
3. Water withdrawal regulations recognizing the responsibility of all users to construct and maintain proper wells. Illinois Department of Public Health regulations provide the guidelines for well construction, and should be based on facts and research data collected from scientifically valid groundwater studies.
4. Continuing research on groundwater availability, recharge and the efficient use of water resources. Such research should be designed to develop a conservation program with emphasis on individual, local and state participation.
5. Local, state, and federal appropriations to bring about groundwater research and technical assistance from state agencies to assist local water planning and management efforts.
6. The Illinois State Water Survey monitoring groundwater movement in aquifers to determine where water shortages may potentially arise.

We oppose the granting of eminent domain authority for water resource exploration.