



# Protect the Mahomet Aquifer!

champaign  
county  
HEALTH CARE  
CONSUMERS

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Dear Friends,

The Mahomet Aquifer – the sole source for drinking water for over 750,000 of us in Central Illinois – is under threat of contamination from toxic chemicals. Champaign County Health Care Consumers (CCHCC) has joined the multi-county effort to protect the Mahomet Aquifer from contamination by a toxic waste landfill, and we need your help and support.

The Clinton Landfill, owned by PDC/AREA Disposal, sits directly above the Mahomet Aquifer, and has created a new kind of dump – a “Chemical Waste Unit” – in order to receive highly toxic, carcinogenic chemical wastes, including Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP) and polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) wastes. *And the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IL EPA) is allowing it. We must take action!* There is no greater environmental or public health threat facing Central Illinois than the possible toxic contamination of the Mahomet Aquifer.

Fortunately, if enough of us take action now, we can prevent PCBs from contaminating the Aquifer, shut down Clinton Landfill’s “Chemical Waste Unit,” and stop the dumping of MGP waste. *Please read on for more information and to learn how you can help protect the Mahomet Aquifer.*

## **About the Mahomet Aquifer**

The Mahomet Aquifer is an ancient underground repository of pure water that lies below the fields of Central Illinois. The aquifer was formed at the end of the last Ice Age when the retreating glacial formations began to melt, depositing large amounts of sand, gravel, and water in a large valley formation called the Mahomet Bedrock Valley. Over 120 communities in 14 counties rely on the Mahomet Aquifer’s water for their drinking, cleaning, agricultural, and industrial needs. About 750,000 people use an average of 57 million gallons of aquifer water per day, just for drinking alone.

## **PDC/AREA Disposal Company’s Clinton Landfill and its “Chemical Waste Unit”**

Peoria Disposal Company (PDC)/AREA Disposal owns the Clinton Landfill, located just outside of Clinton, IL in DeWitt County. The Landfill sits immediately above the Mahomet Aquifer. The landfill has historically stored municipal and household waste collected by local waste haulers (including PDC/AREA Disposal Co.).

In 2007, Clinton Landfill sought a special permit from the IL EPA to create a “Chemical Waste Unit” for the purpose of receiving toxic Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP) and polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) wastes. In a series of moves that many allege violated the law, Clinton Landfill has obtained approval from the IL EPA to now allow the disposal of MGP waste and PCBs at their Chemical Waste Unit. *The Clinton Landfill has been receiving MGP waste since 2011, but is still awaiting approval from the US EPA to receive PCB waste.*

## **About PCBs and MGP waste – an unacceptable risk for the Mahomet Aquifer!**

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are notorious, highly toxic by-products of some manufacturing processes used in earlier decades. They are known cancer-causing agents. PCBs are very resistant to degradation and remain intact even after prolonged contact with water. PCB production has been banned in the United States since 1979, but many sites remain that are contaminated with them and require their careful removal.

Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP) waste is a toxic soup of chemicals and materials, including coal tar, which resulted from the production of gas at former manufactured gas plants. CCHCC is acutely aware of the toxic nature of MGP waste – the toxic site owned by Ameren at 5th & Hill streets in Champaign is a former

MGP site, and its clean-up has been the focus of our 5th & Hill Neighborhood Rights Campaign since 2007. MGP waste contaminates the groundwater of the 5th & Hill Neighborhood, where residents suffer from a disproportionate number of rare cancers and illnesses. MGP waste is highly toxic and should never be allowed to contaminate the groundwater of a neighborhood, nor the Mahomet Aquifer, on which we all depend.

### **How is it possible for the IL EPA to allow toxic waste to endanger the Mahomet Aquifer?**

The "Chemical Waste Unit" at the Clinton Landfill, and its ability to receive toxic MGP and PCB wastes is made possible by legal and administrative sleight-of-hand maneuvers that have nothing to do with protecting the environment or public health. IL EPA, in contradiction with its own regulations and practices (and in contradiction with well-established scientific and medical fact) has re-labeled highly toxic MGP and PCB wastes as "*non-hazardous special waste*" for the purpose of allowing these wastes to go into the newly-invented "Chemical Waste Unit" at the Clinton Landfill.

Even the classification of a landfill as a "Chemical Waste Unit" is a new invention with no regulatory basis in state regulations. "Chemical Waste Unit" does not appear in the regulatory authority for the IL EPA. Therefore, there is a legal question about whether or not the IL EPA could even issue the permit for a "Chemical Waste Unit" since it does not appear that the agency has the power to create a new type of landfill. A multi-county coalition called the Mahomet Aquifer Protection Association is trying to stop the dumping of toxic chemicals at Clinton Landfill through litigation. In addition to litigation, there are actions that local residents can take to help protect the Mahomet Aquifer.

### **How you can help – take action!**

Clinton Landfill's "Chemical Waste Unit" poses a totally unacceptable risk to the Mahomet Aquifer and to the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. One company's profits should not be put above the health and well-being of our community and the precious natural resource upon which we depend for life-sustaining water. *We can, and must, put a stop to this!*

Take action today to help protect the Mahomet Aquifer! You can help in the following ways:

- Add your name to CCHCC's petition calling on the US EPA to deny PDC/AREA Disposal's application for a PCB permit for the Clinton Landfill.
- Sign CCHCC's petition calling for the closure of the Clinton Landfill's Chemical Waste Unit and an immediate halt in the dumping of MGP waste at the Clinton Landfill.
- Join the boycott of PDC/AREA Disposal. If AREA Disposal is your garbage hauler, please consider changing companies.
- Make a contribution to CCHCC to help support our efforts to protect the Mahomet Aquifer. This work will require massive outreach efforts, including the costs of materials and staff time.

To take action to protect the Mahomet Aquifer, please fill out the enclosed light green Pledge Sheet and return it to CCHCC in the enclosed self-addressed postage-paid envelope.

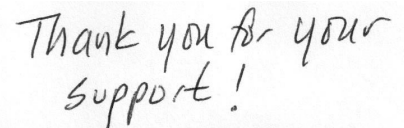
Thank you for your support! Together, we can protect the Mahomet Aquifer for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Claudia Lennhoff, *Executive Director*

*P.S. Your contribution  
is tax-deductible*



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