

PRESS RELEASE

... from the Illinois House of Representatives

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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May Opposes BP Dumping Toxics in Lake

SPRINGFIELD – State Rep. Karen May (D-Highland Park) Monday introduced a resolution opposing British Petroleum’s plan to increase by millions of gallons a day the amount of toxic chemicals and waste the petroleum company dumps into Lake Michigan. The giant oil corporation dodged Indiana’s clean water restrictions and will increase dumping by 2011.

“We have been working for years to clean up Lake Michigan, a crucial source of drinking water and recreation for the residents of northeastern Illinois,” said May. “This is the first time in the past several years that a Great Lakes state has actually approved an increase in pollution to our lake water.”

BP’s Whiting, Indiana oil refinery, already one of the largest polluters along the Great Lakes, received approval to release 54 percent more ammonia, which causes algae blooms that can kill fish and wildlife, and 35 percent more sludge into Lake Michigan each day. Industrial sludge is full of concentrated heavy metals. Heavy metals, like mercury, can affect development in infants and young children. Indiana touts the refinery expansion as a jobs creation program for their state. The project is expected to create only 80 new jobs, and contrary to standard practice among Great Lakes states and Canadian provinces, Indiana did not consult with other states who share borders with Lake Michigan.

May has introduced House Resolution 620 to oppose the planned expansion of the Whiting BP oil refinery and urge federal elected officials and the Environmental Protection Agency to restrict BP’s ability to dump more toxins into Lake Michigan. She will also introduce a similar resolution with the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) to oppose the increased dumping and urge the national organization to help pressure the federal government to oppose BP’s plans. NCSL holds its annual conference at the beginning of August, which May will attend representing Illinois as a member of the Environment Committee.

“After the years of hard work and dedication of leaders in the Chicagoland area and throughout the Great Lakes Region to clean up the lake, this comes as a shock and outrage,” May said. “BP markets itself as an environmentally friendly energy producer, but don’t let that fool you.”

For more information, visit www.ilga.gov, or contact May at (847) 433-9100.

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