

## **The Environment**

### **The Problem**

The most recent waste report from the Environmental Protection Agency brought some good news and some bad news.# The good news is that the nation-wide rate at which we are recycling materials is increasing, and the number of U.S. landfills has steadily declined over the years. The bad news is that the landfill sizes have increased and the amount of trash we throw in landfills is still very high.# It is imperative that the state of Illinois continue increasing efforts towards reducing harmful emissions, reducing air and water pollution, utilizing renewable energy sources, expanding green technology, and maintaining the health of both the people of Illinois and the environment.

### **Senator Noland's Accomplishments**

In addition to his efforts to support Siemens Winergy, Senator Noland has pushed to allow school districts to establish and operate renewable energy sources. A 2007 law that he sponsored enabled school districts to invest in green technology, and a 2010 law that he co-sponsored allows multiple districts to band together and share initial economic costs. Carpentersville-based School District 300 is currently working with two neighboring districts to build a wind turbine, encouraging their students to learn about responsible environmental practices and enabling the school districts to cut their energy costs.# Noland has also sponsored legislation promoting the use of solar technology, providing financial incentives for people who convert their cars to use environmentally-friendly alternative fuel sources, and protecting communities from dangerous chemicals used in lawn-care.

### **Senator Noland's Plan**

Senator Noland will fight for a comprehensive recycling bill that will provide municipalities with the tools and support they need from the state to reduce waste and increase the frequency and effectiveness of recycling in their area. He supports a state initiative to help municipalities implement and maintain a Zero Waste program. His goal is to promote thorough efforts and expansion in recycling with only minimum amounts of trash sent to landfills.# The Environmental Protection Agency writes that the Zero Waste philosophy "aims to minimize waste and resource consumption in order to conserve energy, mitigate climate change, reuse water use, prevent toxic creation, and minimize ecosystem destruction."# Our goal should be to expand recycling to cover more types of materials and push the recycling rate towards 100%. These provide environmental incentives as well as economic incentives, as increased recycling activity and environmental management has been proven to open doors to more employment opportunities.#

A plan to help municipalities adopt Zero Waste programs must include:

- Increase recycling, reducing, and reusing on the manufacturer/production level
  - Encouraging businesses and producers to reuse more materials allows them to get the full benefit of their materials, save money, and promote a more efficient economy#
  - Empower businesses to be leaders in a Zero Waste system
- Create new jobs that support Zero Waste
- A waste diversion minimum set by the state of Illinois that mandates that at least 90% of municipal solid waste is diverted from landfills and incinerators

- Decreasing as much waste as possible, reuse and recycling as many materials as possible, and compost only as a last resort
- Reduction in the growth of landfill size and reduction of the rate of new landfill sites
- The formation of a new committee that works with individual municipalities to achieve their individual goals in a Zero Waste system
  - help municipalities set a target year to achieve Zero Waste
  - help municipalities set short-term and long-term goals specifically oriented towards their communities' needs
  - facilitating an open forum for the entire community, residents, and businesses to be involved in the process and help generate ideas
  - help municipalities build alliances such as teaming up with other business associations, government bodies, schools, non-profit organizations, etc.
- Increased efforts to separate food scraps and other organics from all other materials
- New incentives to reduce waste and recycle more frequently, such as compensation for additional recycling haulers
- Reform state purchasing in ways that support Zero Waste
- Empower all residents in Illinois to embrace Zero Waste
  - getting the word out to all Illinoisans by utilizing media campaigns, social media, and the latest electronic tools to “change the culture” in Illinois regarding recycling and waste management
  - educate consumers on benefits
  - change the mindset by approaching ‘waste’ as a resource