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New Laws Will Reduce Pharmaceuticals in Drinking Water,
Allow Recycled Water to be Used for Non-Consumption Purposes

CHICAGO – August 24, 2011. Governor Pat Quinn today signed three bills to improve Illinois environment and water systems. The Governor signed House Bills 2056 and 3090 to improve and enhance pharmaceutical collection and disposal programs, as well as House Bill 248, to allow recycled, treated wastewater to be used for non-consumption purposes, such as watering golf courses.

"Pure and plentiful drinking water is every Illinois citizen's right," Governor Quinn said. "These bills will help Illinois conserve water, protect the safety of our drinking water supplies and ensure that unused medications are disposed of properly."

Large-scale, non-consumption irrigation projects – such as the maintenance of parks and golf courses – use enormous quantities of drinking-quality water. House Bill 248, sponsored by Rep. Karen May (D-Highland Park) and Sen. Susan Garrett, (D-Lake Forest), allows the North Shore Sanitary District to supply sustainable, environmentally-friendly treated wastewater to identified partners. The recycled wastewater will save large volumes of treated drinking water.

House Bill 2056, sponsored by Rep. Joann Osmond (R-Antioch) and Sen. Suzi Schmidt (R-Lake Villa), creates a pharmaceutical collection and disposal program to ensure safe disposal of excess prescription medication. The legislation began as an initiative of students from Pontiac and Antioch High Schools, both of which have been active in efforts to collect and properly dispose of unused pharmaceuticals. The program is designed as a collaborative effort between communities, local pharmacies, police departments, hospitals, city officials and students to educate the public about the misuse and abuse of pharmaceuticals, as well as discarded pharmaceuticals' impact on the environment. Numerous studies have shown that residue from many pharmaceuticals can be found in both drinking water sources and in finished drinking water.

House Bill 3090, sponsored by Rep. Luis Arroyo, (D-Chicago) and Sen. William Delgado (D-Chicago), allows a city, village, or municipality to authorize the use of its city hall or police department to display containers suitable for use as a receptacles for used, expired or unwanted pharmaceuticals.

"Every year families are left with excess prescription drugs that could be harmful if they are accessible to children who may accidently swallow them or youths who may use the drugs to get high," Senator Delgado, Chairman of the Senate Public Health Committee said. "This legislation will allow for additional locations where people can safely dispose of prescription drugs that have expired or are not needed. This initiative addresses a vital public health and safety issue."

House Bill 248 is effective immediately. House Bills 2056 and 3090 take effect Jan. 1.

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