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Southern Illinois Leaders, GROW-IL Call on Gov. Quinn to Implement Fracking Rules

MARION, IL - Today marks the 400th day since the Hydraulic Fracturing Regulatory Act was signed into law by Governor Pat Quinn. However, hydraulic fracturing still has not begun in Illinois because the necessary rules have not been implemented by the Quinn administration.

Despite the urgency felt by most, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) has failed to issue final rules and has reportedly hired only a few of the dozens of employees they need to complete their rulemaking assignment, thus causing this enormous resource to sit untapped. "The Quinn administration has failed to implement the law passed overwhelmingly by a bipartisan group of lawmakers. It is the strongest set of regulations in the nation and backed by environmental organizations, business community and agricultural interests," said Mark Denzler, vice president and COO of the Illinois Manufacturers' Association. "Illinois, and southern Illinois in particular, have one of the highest unemployment rates in the U.S. Yet Governor Quinn is allowing politics to derail the creation of thousands of jobs and millions in tax revenue."

According to a study by Illinois State University professor Dr. David Loomis, the New Albany shale formation covering a substantial portion of southern Illinois could potentially have a \$9.5 billion economic impact in our state and produce up to 47,000 jobs annually. "Illinois is missing out on a major opportunity for job creation, significant tax revenue for local and state governments and reduced energy prices for every family in Illinois—all while decreasing our reliance on foreign sources of energy," said Clint Taylor, business manager of the Southern and Central Illinois Laborers' District Council. Industry analysts estimate that oil and gas extracted from domestic shale has already created \$1,200 of disposable income for the average American household.

"Hydraulic fracturing is something we believe has great potential—the delay is like losing your rights," said Marion Mayor Bob Butler. "With this delay, we are experiencing a lack of job creation and lack of infusion of more money into the economy. The state of the economy in southern Illinois is not good, overall it's suffering. There is a malaise here. The problem is lack of jobs; we have qualified people, a strong labor workforce, but the jobs just aren't there. We get calls every day from people looking for jobs. It is almost a desperate situation for many. We need the rules to be implemented so that hydraulic fracturing can begin. The fact that this has been dragging on so long is a travesty."

The Growing Resources and Opportunity for the Workforce in Illinois coalition (GROW-IL) helped advocate the passage of the country's most comprehensive hydraulic fracturing laws. GROW-IL recognizes the importance of a careful rulemaking process by the IDNR as dedicated stewards caring for our land, but the time for utilizing our natural resources in a responsible way is long overdue. 400 days ago when Gov. Quinn signed the fracking bill into law, he drew praise from environmental advocates who had aligned with GROW-IL, proudly claiming the legislation would constitute the most stringent regulations on fracking in the country. But now environmental extremists are using election year politics to pressure the governor and delay this vital process.

ABOUT GROW-IL

GROW-IL is a diverse coalition of more than three dozen business, labor, construction, transportation and agricultural organizations focused on enacting common sense hydraulic fracturing legislation in Springfield and are led by three co-chairs: Illinois Manufacturers' Association, Illinois AFL-CIO and the Illinois Petroleum Council. For more information, visit www.grow-il.org.