

Press Conference – March 4, 2009, 2:00 pm
Blue Room, Capitol Building
Springfield, IL

Good afternoon. My name is Hal Sprague. I am a Senior Policy Associate with CNT, the Center for Neighborhood Technology, in Chicago. CNT is a think-and-do tank that has been working on urban sustainability issues for the past 30 years. Our mission is to develop, test and bring to scale innovative solutions for urban communities.

I want to talk briefly about storm water management. In conjunction with its mention in the Illinois Environmental Council's Annual Briefing Book, CNT has submitted a proposed bill to the General Assembly to clean our waters, provide healthier neighborhoods, and save our cities and towns money. The strategy involves managing rain drops where they fall, instead of building ever larger and more expensive pipe and reservoir systems to handle storm water after it leaves the land.

There are a number of storm water management techniques that can do this, and collectively we call them "green infrastructure". They have already been proven to work well in Illinois, and they provide many more benefits than conventional storm water systems, that are designed simply to get storm water off the land as quickly as possible. In addition to being less expensive than conventional systems, green infrastructure does a better job at cleaning storm water, reducing flooding, recharging groundwater, reducing energy use, cleaning the air, and beautifying our streets.

The parallel bills in the Illinois Senate and House require the Illinois EPA to adopt new regulations that set state wide standards for storm water management systems and encourage the use of green infrastructure to meet these standards. We look forward to working with the General Assembly to pass this important legislation that will provide cleaner water, healthier neighborhoods and less costly infrastructure all at the same time. Thank you.

Hal Sprague, Senior Policy Associate
Center for Neighborhood Technology
Chicago, Illinois