

DRAFT

**TO:** Mayor Laurel Lunt Prussing and Members of the City Council  
**FROM:** Urbana Sustainability Advisory Commission  
**DATE:**  
**SUBJECT:** UCSD effluent sale

The Mayor has asked the Urbana Sustainability Advisory Commission to offer advice on the pros and cons of the potential sale of effluent from the Urbana-Champaign Sanitary District (UCSD) to a fertilizer factory and to take a position on the issue. The commission has considered presentations and public dialogue with UCSD and Prairie Rivers Network. The following consensus statements of the Sustainability Advisory Commission relate specifically to environmental and sustainability aspects of the proposal, but do not weigh these against the ratepayer, taxpayer, economic development, and social benefits and tradeoffs associated with the sale.

The proposed sale of water from UCSD to Cronus is an opportunity to demonstrate reuse of effluent for industrial purposes and to address a major new demand for water without increasing demand on the Mahomet Aquifer.

UCSD discharge of effluent to surface waters in Copper Slough and the Saline Branch of the Salt Fork of the Vermilion River over many decades has provided a habitat benefit in the affected reaches, especially in the last 20-30 years as the discharge volumes have grown and become much cleaner. In times of drought, UCSD effluent discharge contributes the majority of flow and provides a refuge for fish and aquatic species as well as recreational opportunities for people.

UCSD has shown good faith to date by working with scientists and citizen groups concerned about potential impacts of the sale. SAC encourages these conversations to continue. In particular, SAC recommends a scientific monitoring plan be developed to document conditions in affected stream reaches before and after implementation of any sale. Sound information is necessary to develop and evaluate habitat and other enhancement projects that UCSD or others may pursue in the future.