

Beginning with fertilizer purchased for the 2014 Growing Season, Northern Partners Coop will be listing on every fertilizer invoice a line item identified as **Illinois Fertilizer Fees**. These fees comprise: 75¢ for NREC (Nutrient Research and Education Council) and 25¢ for Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDA) fertilizer quality, safety and inspection fee. The reasons for this assessment are explained here:

Regulatory pressures on the Illinois nutrient industry are serious.

USEPA considers Illinois agriculture a major contributor of nutrients resulting in Gulf Hypoxia as well as unacceptable levels of N and P in some Illinois waterways. Research and educational needs exist for agriculture to avoid regulation on nutrient application by proving that growers are capable of managing nutrients to reduce nutrient losses to the environment.

If we are to protect our ability to manage our nutrients through personal responsibility and best available science, we must invest ourselves in research and on-farm implementation of sound nutrient practices. To do nothing assures that regulations are coming including restrictions on our ability to freely choose the nutrient source, rate, time and method of application that is best for each individual farm.

The NREC is a public-private partnership with IDA. As such, the NREC assessments are not subject to fund sweeps, as they are held outside of state government.