



January 31, 2014

MADIGAN SECURES COURT ORDER WITH WASTE MANAGEMENT LANDFILL FOLLOWING RELEASE OF SICKENING GASES

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced that a court has entered an order requiring a DeKalb County landfill operator to take extra precautions to prevent the release of noxious gases and to notify the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) before digging into the solid waste at the landfill and causing the release of landfill gases.

Madigan's office filed a civil lawsuit, along with the agreed injunction order, today in DeKalb County Circuit Court in response to the Jan. 14 release of a sickening odor at a landfill run by Waste Management of Illinois, Inc. A contractor working on a project to expand the landfill's gas collection system dug into a section of decomposing garbage and caused the release of landfill gas that produced a heavy odor. The gas and odor drifted into a nearby elementary school's ventilation system, sickening students and teachers. Emergency crews responded to the school, with 71 people eventually seeking medical treatment at the local hospital for low-level carbon monoxide exposure, according to media reports.

"We sought this court order to prevent future incidents like this that endanger the health of everyone near the landfill," Madigan said. "The order requires Waste Management of Illinois to take immediate steps to ensure this cannot happen again."

The agreed injunction order prohibits Waste Management from digging into solid waste at the landfill if the wind is from a southerly direction in excess of 10 miles per hour or if other conditions would cause the digging to impact air quality. The order also requires employees to wear gas monitors to detect releases when excavating at the landfill. Finally, the order mandates that Waste Management install a weather station at the landfill to continuously record conditions and report them to the IEPA.

The civil complaint filed today against Waste Management of Illinois alleges several violations of the environmental laws stemming from the Jan. 14 incident, including conduct that caused substantial endangerment to the public health and welfare, air pollution, violations of waste disposal regulations and violations of the landfill permit. In each count of the complaint, Madigan's office seeks the statutory maximum penalty of \$50,000 per violation and \$10,000 for each day each violation continues.

Judge William Brady set the matter for status on Mar. 25. Assistant Attorneys General Jennifer Van Wie and Gerald Karr are handling the case for Madigan's Environmental Enforcement Bureau.

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