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ATTORNEY GENERAL SUES CENTRAL ILLINOIS DEMOLITION CONTRACTOR FOR IMPROPERLY DISPOSING OF ASBESTOS***Court grants Madigan's request for temporary restraining order to cease operations***

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today filed a complaint against the owner of the former Pillsbury Mills manufacturing facility in Springfield and its onsite demolition contractor for improperly removing and disposing of asbestos.

The complaint filed today in Sangamon County alleges that facility owner P. Mills and contractor Midwest Demolition and Scrap, Inc., along with co-owner Joseph Chernis violated the Illinois Environmental Protection Act and federal regulations to prevent asbestos pollution. Madigan's lawsuit seeks a permanent injunction that will require the company to properly dispose of asbestos containing materials (ACM), as well as civil penalties.

Today the court granted Madigan's request for a temporary restraining order that requires the defendants to immediately cease all demolition activities, post asbestos warning signs, secure all facility entrances and debris, and take steps to determine and report the extent of the contamination.

"The defendants' disregard of the proper procedures to dispose of of harmful, cancer-causing materials is inexcusable," said Madigan. "This lawsuit will ensure that current operations stop, and will require the defendants to take immediate steps to prevent workers and residents from being exposed to asbestos."

The Illinois EPA referred the case to the Attorney General after inspectors found ACM being stored in trash bags, open trash cans and boxes, as well as debris scattered around the facility. According to Madigan, the defendants' improper removal, handling and failure to dispose of ACM has created a substantial danger to public health.

Proper disposal includes wetting ACM during removal and ensuring the material remains wet until it is collected and contained, or treated prior to going to a disposal site. According to the U.S. EPA, exposure to asbestos can lead to cancer, mesothelioma and asbestosis. There is no known safe exposure level to asbestos.

Assistant Attorneys General Jane McBride, David Samuels and Andrew Suthard are handling the case for Madigan's Environmental Bureau.

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