



June 13, 2016

MADIGAN FILES SUIT AGAINST FORD HEIGHTS RECYCLING COMPANY FOLLOWING FIRE***Court Grants Attorney General Madigan's Request for Immediate Relief***

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced a lawsuit against a suburban recycling company following a tire fire that jeopardized air and water quality.

Madigan filed the lawsuit in Cook County Circuit Court against Illinois-based GMI Recycling Services, Inc. (GMI) following a tire fire at the Ford Heights-based facility. The 10-acre facility, located at 1705 Cottage Grove Ave., contains approximately 7,800 tons of shredded tires. The complaint alleges that on May 24 approximately half of the shredded tires ignited, causing a fire that could reportedly be seen from miles away.

According to Madigan's complaint, officials from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) responding to the fire detected odors indicating the presence of volatile organic compounds. When burned, shredded tires also release oils including benzene, toluene and metals, which can mix with water runoff from firefighting activities and rainfall.

Along with filing the lawsuit, Madigan's office obtained an agreed interim order that addresses the immediate environmental concerns while the litigation continues. The court's order requires GMI to secure the facility, notify the IEPA in the event there are any more flare-ups and immediately contain any additional flare-ups. GMI must also take steps to prevent potentially contaminated runoff in a retaining pond from spreading to nearby waters.

"This order will ensure that the company secures the site to protect residents from potential contamination caused by the fire," Madigan said.

"This tire fire caused a significant threat to the environment and public health, and just as importantly, expended valuable resources of multiple fire departments, federal, state and local government agencies to respond to this emergency," said Illinois EPA Director Lisa Bonnett. "The steps taken through this order will ensure prompt notification and required actions to limit environmental and public health impacts to the surrounding community."

The GMI facility is located in a residential area near schools and businesses. Madigan's lawsuit seeks to prevent future contamination and to obtain appropriate civil penalties. Tire fire emissions include pollutants such as carbon monoxide, chemicals and metals that pose health hazards.

The case was referred to Madigan's office by the IEPA. Assistant Attorneys General Jamie D. Getz and Robert Petti are handling the case for Madigan's Environmental Bureau.

-30-

[Return to June 2016 Press Releases](#)