



Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul PRESS RELEASE

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ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL FILES LAWSUIT AGAINST CHEMICAL MANUFACTURING FACILITY OVER REPEATED VIOLATIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS AT CICERO FACILITY

Chicago – Attorney General Kwame Raoul today announced a lawsuit against Koppers Inc. (Koppers) and Koppers Carbon Materials LLC (KCM) over the alleged continued environmental and human health effects from Koppers’ chemical manufacturing facility in Cicero, Illinois.

Koppers’ facility is located at 3900 S. Laramie Ave. in Cicero in an area of environmental justice concern. The facility produces chemical products, including creosotes, coal tar pitches, coal tar distillate, naphthalene and phthalic anhydride, by converting tar waste from steel production and petroleum refining. These chemical products are later used to produce treated wood, aluminum, steel, concrete, and rubber items.

Raoul’s lawsuit alleges that on multiple occasions, Koppers violated state and federal environmental statutes and regulations by failing to properly operate pollution control equipment and conduct required testing and monitoring, which caused an excess of air pollutants, including volatile organic materials, to be emitted into the atmosphere. The surrounding Cicero community has expressed concern over the health impacts of emissions from the Koppers facility for many years.

“Koppers has continuously failed to follow laws that protect against high levels of dangerous pollutants entering our atmosphere,” Raoul said. “I will continue to work to protect communities from the health and environmental impacts of pollution and hold companies accountable for violations of our environmental laws.”

[According to Raoul’s lawsuit](#) – filed on Wednesday in Cook County Circuit Court – Koppers submitted reports, required by its construction permits, operating permit, and state and federal law, to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) demonstrating repeated instances where it failed to properly reduce hazardous air pollutant emissions from its naphthalene distillation plant. Raoul’s lawsuit also alleges Koppers submitted required deviation reports showing malfunctions of its thermal oxidizer that controls emissions of volatile organic materials. Raoul’s lawsuit alleges violations of the Illinois Environmental Protection Act, the Illinois Pollution Control Board’s air pollution regulations, federal environmental regulations, and construction and operating permits.

Raoul's lawsuit is based on a referral from the IEPA.

"Koppers Inc. has a long history of violating permit conditions and environmental regulations, resulting in numerous violation notices and Illinois EPA pursuing legal action against the Cicero facility," said Illinois EPA Director James Jennings. "This lawsuit encompasses their poor compliance history and Illinois EPA looks forward to working closely with the Attorney General's Office for the duration of this case."

The Attorney General's office enforces Illinois' environmental protection laws. Attorney General Raoul's Environmental Enforcement Division, which enforces civil environmental laws, has recovered millions of dollars from polluters and required companies to undertake environmental improvement projects in communities impacted by pollution. Raoul encourages residents to report environmental justice and other environmental concerns to his office by emailing ej@ilag.gov.

Assistant Attorneys General Kevin Garstka, Rebecca Kanz and Caitlin Kelly are handling the case for Raoul's Environmental Bureau.