

## **Another petcoke facility targeted**

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Chicago Sun-Times (suntimes.com) – Tina Sfondeles

The environmental and legal crackdown on the storage of petroleum coke along the Calumet River continued late Thursday, as the city and state sued owners of another Southeast Side storage site, seeking to remove petcoke and coke that residents say is causing black dust to coat their homes.

The lawsuit filed by the Illinois Attorney General's Office and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency against Beemsterboer Slag Co. seeks a court order for the company to remove petcoke and metallurgical coke or "metcoke" from its 22-acre Chicago facility at 2900 E. 106th St. It also seeks to stop the company from storing, handling, screening, loading and unloading petcoke, metcoke and other "unpermitted" materials at its location until it obtains a permit from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

Petcoke, a byproduct of the oil refinery process that's high in sulfur and carbon, is usually shipped overseas where it is burned as fuel. Metcoke is made by subjecting bituminous coal to extremely high temperatures to produce a harder fuel used in the iron and steel industries.

The suit alleges Beemsterboer, based in Hammond, but operating the Chicago storage site, has been handling unpermitted materials, like petcoke, since 2008, without obtaining a proper permit from the IEPA.

"Beemsterboer's failure to follow the environmental laws is a serious threat to the public health," Attorney General Lisa Madigan said in a statement Friday.

A permit issued by the IEPA allows for coal operations at the site but not does authorize Beemsterboer to handle any other type of material, such as petcoke and metcoke, the suit said.

In a statement, Alan Beemsterboer said the company has been cooperating with the state since an Oct. 30 inspection: "We are currently removing all carbon based products, and expect this to be finished by the end of December," Beemsterboer said in an email. "We are doing all this in good faith while waiting for permit approval."

The suit asks that the company cease all operations that are sending particles into nearby residential areas on the Southeast Side in violation of air pollution and environmental laws.

For the last several months, residents in the East Side and South Deering neighborhoods have complained of black dust coating their homes and belongings. After a fiery community meeting last week, the IEPA on Tuesday decided to postpone a permit to nearby KCBX Terminals Co., which runs two storage sites along the Calumet River. And on Monday, Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced he had ordered the Department of Public Health to develop regulations to crack down on the "harmful emissions" plaguing residents.

Madigan and the IEPA filed suit against KCBX, a subsidiary of Koch Industries, earlier this month to undertake all necessary action to prevent the release of petcoke dust.





