

## **Ordinance would ban storage of petroleum coke in Chicago**

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Chicago Tribune (chicagotribune.com) - Michael Hawthorne and Hal Dardick

Two Chicago aldermen introduced an ordinance today that would prohibit companies from storing petroleum coke in the city, adding more political pressure to tamp down dust from uncovered mounds of refinery waste on the Southeast Side.

Ald. John Pope, 10th, and Ed Burke, 14th, also unveiled an alternative proposal that would stop short of banning petroleum coke but require operators to take additional steps to reduce dust from three storage terminals on the Calumet River south of the Chicago Skyway bridge.

The proposals came a day after Mayor Rahm Emanuel vowed to push his own plan that would either require the storage terminals to enclose piles of petroleum coke and coal or surround them with high walls on three sides, leaving them open to the river.

Pope, who represents the East Side and South Deering neighborhoods, has been under increasing pressure from constituents to take action against the storage terminal operators. Residents say thick black clouds blowing off the piles often force them to stay inside with their windows closed.

Since the Tribune and other media drew attention to the problems last month, Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency have filed complaints against KCBX Terminals Co. and Beemsterboer Slag Co. Emanuel signaled he would step in after the U.S. EPA last week ordered monitors erected around the storage terminals to measure lung-damaging particulate matter.

Both companies are longtime supporters of Pope, contributing at least \$28,610 combined to his campaign funds since 2000, according to campaign finance records maintained by the Illinois State Board of Elections.

Pope said he decided to introduce the proposed ordinances following two heated community forums where residents vented their frustration about dust from the piles. Many said the problems have become worse since the terminals started acquiring more petroleum coke, also known as petcoke.

“It’s obvious there needs to be steps taken to improve what is happening,” Pope said.

KCBX, a company controlled by wealthy industrialists Charles and David Koch, owns two of the sites, one along 100th Street south and a larger terminal between 108th and 111th streets.

In a statement, KCBX said it recently installed 42 new computer-controlled water cannons at the larger site that can douse the piles with up to 1,800 gallons of water a minute. The company is testing a system that automatically turns on the cannons based on weather conditions and adjusts to wind directions.

Beemsterboer has not responded to requests for comment about its storage terminal at 106th Street and the river.

Much of the petcoke stored in Chicago comes from a nearby BP refinery in Whiting, Ind., where a federal legal settlement requires the oil giant to store any waste on site behind 40-foot walls. An enclosed conveyor and loading system is equipped with wind screens and water sprayers to keep dust down.

All of the petcoke from Whiting eventually is sent just over the state border to the uncovered piles managed by KCBX.

By the end of the year, BP is expected to complete an overhaul of the Whiting refinery that will make it the world's second-largest source of petcoke — more than tripling its output to 2.2 million tons from 700,000 tons a year. The project is one of several at U.S. refineries that are shifting to heavier oil from the tar sands region of Alberta.

Said Burke: “It is our intention that Chicago will become a petcoke-free city just as the nearby BP facility in Whiting embarks upon its plan to dramatically increase its production of this controversial byproduct.”