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PRESS RELEASE

June 25, 2014

Mayor responds to DEQ order to limit Harrelson Landfill operations

The administrative order issued today by the Department of Environmental Quality requiring a landfill owned by Harrelson Material Management, Inc., to cease certain operations still falls short of what's needed to ensure the health and safety of residents in the city's MLK Neighborhood, Mayor Cedric Glover said.

The order says that Harrelson must stop receiving and disposing of new material, which is believed to be causing fire and smoke issues at the site. The order also requires Harrelson to submit a revised version of a fire mitigation plan by July 1 so that the fire can be extinguished. Additionally, Harrelson must provide weekly, written reports to DEQ documenting the plan's implementation.

"This still does not require Harrelson to permanently shut down all operations at this facility, thus it falls considerably short of the request I made last week to Gov. Jindal," Mayor Glover said. "The history of violations at this landfill is horrendous and the only real priority at this point is making sure the folks who have to inhale this exhaust every day get immediate relief. The only distinction between this order and previous cease and desist orders is there's no time frame attached."

Mayor Glover also wants DEQ to require Harrelson to submit a fully-funded landfill remediation program. The process of closing the landfill consists of steps taken to minimize or prevent contamination. This typically involves the placement of a soil cover or synthetic cap over the landfill. Remediation refers to steps taken to clean up or reduce contamination after basic closure has occurred. This process helps ensure off-site contamination to public water lines, home filtering systems, gas ventilation systems, etc., is non-existent or limited.

The city has a history of litigation with the privately-owned landfill that dates back to 1994, the same year the city council voted unanimously not to grant a zoning request from the company. The facility has accumulated pages and pages worth of violations over the years but has continued to operate without interruption. In 2008, leaders from the MLK community filed suit against Harrelson to close the landfill but lost that battle in court.

About five years ago, Harrelson presented a proposal to expand the landfill operation from construction debris only to include residential waste as well. That effort, though supported by some local and state elected officials, was not successful.



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“There are lots of folks who are on the wrong side of history on this issue and if that were not the case, then this facility would have been shut down and remediated a long time ago,” Mayor Glover said. “From my perspective, anything short of a permanent closure and remediation is unacceptable because this landfill has been allowed to operate with impunity for years and it clearly threatens the welfare not only of residents in the MLK community, but all Shreveport residents.”

More information on this topic can be found at www.shreveportla.gov.

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