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PRESS RELEASE

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EPA agrees to play active role in Harrelson Landfill order

The Environmental Protection Agency has agreed to help facilitate the effective closure of a private landfill that has long been a source of complaints by Shreveport residents concerned about the smoke and fumes spewed by the underground fires that have burned at the site for years.

In an effort to continue to explore options to address issues resulting from continued fires and other activities at the landfill operated by Harrelson Materials Management, Inc., Mayor Cedric Glover convened a meeting today with representatives from EPA Region 6, the State Fire Marshal, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, Councilwoman Rose McCulloch, Parish Commissioner Lyndon Johnson and representatives from various city departments.

Additionally, Sen. Greg Tarver, Rep. Patrick Williams and LDEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch were invited but were unavailable to attend. Sen. Tarver was out of town and Secretary Hatch had a representative participating on behalf of LDEQ via conference call.

Mayor Glover laid out the city's concerns with the gaps in the fire mitigation plan approved by LDEQ and asked the EPA to inject itself in the process to help develop a more definitive plan and timeline for extinguishing the fires and closing the landfill as well as the rock crushing and agricultural waste operations.

Although the landfill is regulated by the state, the federal government has the authority to be engaged in this matter due to issues involving air quality and the potential that unauthorized materials are being disposed of at the site.

"When state government fails to lead and protect its citizens, it becomes incumbent upon those of us who are affected and impacted to reach out and ask that the Federal Government, in this case the EPA, step in where state level officials have failed," Mayor Glover said. "At this point, that's what we're doing with the EPA."

Representing the EPA at the meeting was Sam Coleman, deputy regional administrator, and Eric Adidas, an environmental scientist.

"In the past, we haven't always been able to get everyone in the same room to document circumstances and to form a plan that works," Coleman said. "I believe we'll be able to have



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success if we can show people what an effective mitigation plan looks like and empower people through knowledge.”

Coleman said the EPA would:

- Participate in and convene future public meetings about the landfill
- Consider providing additional air-quality monitoring near the landfill
- Be prepared to review and comment on Harrelson’s response to the Sept. 4 order from LDEQ to provide additional resources and equipment, including third-party personnel, to implement the approved fire mitigation plan. That response is due Sept. 14.
- Include the city of Shreveport and all necessary parties on all reviews of future proposed changes to Harrelson’s fire mitigation efforts

In addition to bringing in the EPA, Mayor Glover also directed a legal challenge to address weaknesses in Harrelson’s plan to put out the fire. On Sept. 8, the city filed an appeal challenging the fire mitigation plan, ultimately seeking to modify certain terms and conditions of the state’s order to close; but not to stop closure of the landfill but to ensure it was properly closed. The concerns, which have been outlined to the state on several occasions but still not incorporated in the approved mitigation plan, will be presented at the hearing for this judicial review.

“It’s important to stress that this action was not meant to delay in any way the efforts to ultimately put out the fire and close the landfill,” Mayor Glover said. “But at the time we filed it, we had no other recourse in which to state our case and make sure our concerns would be addressed. To be clear, the plan that was laid out and accepted by LDEQ was wholly ineffective and inadequate to put out the fire at the Harrelson landfill. And, in fact, it served to function as an open-ended opportunity for Harrelson to continue to profit and pollute from his landfill’s rock crushing and agricultural waste processing operation.”

The LDEQ last month ordered HMM to put out the fire, which has been burning for years from its Russell Road location within the historic MLK Neighborhood. In making his case today, Mayor Glover referenced former President Bill Clinton’s 1994 Executive Order on Environmental Justice, which is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

The state has ordered Harrelson to extinguish the fire. However, that order places no limit on how long that will actually take but said Harrelson has to start the process within 180 days. The landfill does not have to close until the fire is extinguished.



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Harrelson is operating its rock crushing business at the same site without the proper approvals in place and the city is requesting the federal government to provide air emissions monitoring to ensure the health and safety of residents in the area.

Shreveport Fire Department officials have identified several deficiencies with the company's plan to extinguish the fires and monitor air quality. Some of those deficiencies include Harrelson's lack of manpower and expertise to extinguish a subterranean fire; the consultants hired by Harrelson to oversee implementation of the plan have no expertise battling subterranean fires; and no apparent plan to provide public notice if elevated levels of carbon monoxide, hydrogen sulfide or other potentially toxic gases are discovered.

“The lack of transparency surrounding this whole operation has allowed Harrelson to operate in the manner that it has for years,” Mayor Glover said. “What we need to do now is to ensure an honest narrative that details just how it is we go about putting the fire out immediately, closing the landfill and restoring the site to its previous state without placing any additional financial burden on the citizens of Shreveport.”

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