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DNR Evaluating Neighborhood Comments on New Kipp Discharges

On February 6th, the Department of Natural Resources held a public hearing on a proposal from Madison-Kipp Corporation to increase air pollution emissions from its aluminum foundry on Atwood Avenue. Kipp has requested an increase in particulate and aluminum salt emissions from its two aluminum melting furnaces. A permit condition requiring the separation of scrap metal addition and chlorine injection would be removed. The DNR issued a draft permit in December concluding the furnace project met all air pollution control requirements and air quality standards. Despite being scheduled for the middle of the day, many residents were still able to attend the 2 ½ hour hearing and speak before the DNR. All speakers opposed the new discharges and questioned DNR staff on whether the health of residents surrounding the foundry were being protected. Speakers included State Representative Mark Miller and Dane County Clerk Joe Parisi. Residents cited numerous health complaints and considered additional air pollution was unacceptable. DNR staff attorney, Marcia Penner, reminded everyone that as long as Kipp complied with the regulations, the new discharges could be approved.

Besides the hearing, written comments were also received, including those from the SASY Neighborhood Association, parents and staff at Lowell Elementary School, and Clean Air Madison, neighborhood residents dedicated to pollution reductions at Kipp. DNR staff must address all public comments before issuing a final permit. Among these comments are several issues which could potentially delay issuance of the final permit. The state regulations limiting particulate emissions from the furnaces are over 30 years and require no air pollution control equipment. Written comments to the DNR noted that when Kipp began using chlorine to purify aluminum scrap in the mid-1990's, it became a major source of air pollution subject to the more stringent PSD regulations. These rules would require the furnaces to be controlled using state-of-the-art air pollution control equipment to remove the particulate, aluminum salts, hydrogen chloride and dioxin emissions. To assure the foundry will comply with the air quality standards, DNR staff used computer modeling to estimate how the discharges from the foundry disperse throughout the neighborhood. However, DNR staff assumed the foundry was located in a flat, rural area. DNR staff were provided with USEPA guidance which require them to account for the multi-story buildings surrounding the foundry, many close to the foundry stacks and roof vents.

DNR staff received numerous requests from neighbors, Representative Miller and Mayor Dave Cieslewicz to extend the comment period and hold another hearing at a more convenient time and place. In the end, the DNR extended the comment period to February 26th but did not schedule a new hearing. Neighborhood residents interested in the DNR's final decision on this project can contact Tom Roushar at the DNR southern region office at 273-5603 or via email at Thomas.Roushar@dnr.state.wi.us, or visit www.sasyna.org.

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