

Environmental Justice Complaint Filed Against DNR

Last month, Clean Air Madison (CAM) filed a complaint with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency against the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). CAM claimed that the DNR violated the requirements of the Environmental Justice Program when it issued an air pollution permit to the Madison-Kipp aluminum foundry on Atwood Avenue. The complaint requests that USEPA conduct an investigation to determine if further environmental protection measures should have been required.

The Environmental Justice Program was developed from the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It requires fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to implementation of environmental laws.

The complaint describes how one year earlier the DNR issued an air pollution permit for the Madison Gas & Electric West Campus Generating Station. This project included a number of additional air pollution control measures which were not included in the Madison-Kipp permit. These included: use of state-of-the-art air pollution control equipment; compliance tests; continuous emissions monitoring; modern computer modeling methods to verify compliance with air quality standards; evaluation of compliance with the newest and more protection air quality standard for fine particles; and an agreement with the surrounding neighborhood to control air and noise pollution beyond current requirements.

The complaint notes that while the east side of Madison is home to the many low income and minority families, the west side location of the MG&E project is more affluent and less diverse. The east side of Madison also has the burden of dealing with the environmental impacts of the majority of the city's industries and sources of pollution.

CAM is composed of neighborhood residents working to make the Madison-Kipp aluminum foundry on Atwood Avenue a quieter, safer and cleaner industry. Besides this recent environmental justice complaint, CAM is also challenging the DNR through the state's contested case hearing process. The hearing is scheduled for February of 2005. If you would like to read the environmental justice complaint, donate to the CAM legal defense fund, or find out how you can get involved, write P.O. Box 14172, Madison, WI 53708, or visit the CAM web site at: www.cleanairmadison.org.