



For Immediate Release
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**ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE CALLS FOR IEPA, IDNR,
IDPH, U.S. EPA AND WAUKEGAN TO JOIN TASK FORCE TO
INVESTIGATE ASBESTOS AT ILLINOIS BEACH STATE PARK**

Chicago – Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced her office, working with State Sen. Susan Garrett, is calling for the creation of a task force with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and the City of Waukegan to investigate whether asbestos found around the Johns Manville Superfund site in Waukegan creates a public health threat.

Madigan decided to call for the creation of the task force after being contacted by Garrett and local citizens.

Madigan said concerns regarding asbestos contamination and its possible public health impacts have been raised by a local citizens group in a report prepared on its behalf and made public on June 18, 2003. On June 20, Madigan's office contacted the Great Lakes Center for Occupational and Environmental Safety and Health at the University of Illinois-Chicago, School of Public Health, to request its assistance in reviewing the report and recommending any needed action to protect the health of the public in the area.

Madigan said specific areas of concern are the Illinois Beach State Park, located along a 6.5-mile stretch of Lake Michigan starting immediately north of the Johns Manville site, and a parking lot, foot path and fishing pier, located south of the Johns Manville site. Should the agencies agree to join Madigan's office in forming a task force, Madigan said the group's first priority will be to coordinate the review of the public health questions by the Great Lakes Center. The Great Lakes Center is directed by Dr. Dan Hryhorczuk, M.D., MPH, who has agreed to oversee the work of his staff in this review.

“Serious public health and environmental law enforcement questions have been raised and these questions need to be answered,” Madigan said. “The job of this task force is to obtain answers concerning whether public health

is threatened by asbestos found at the state park and nearby areas and to identify any necessary enforcement steps that must be taken.”

“The most recent findings of asbestos in Lake Michigan are very troubling from many perspectives. We are concerned that the asbestos is still in the water. We are concerned that there may be a public safety issue that needs immediate attention. For those reasons, we must come together and determine what went wrong and what we can do to ensure safe water and beaches,” Garrett said.

The Attorney General’s office sued Johns Manville International, Inc., in June 2001, for alleged violations of the Illinois Environmental Protection Act at its Waukegan facility relating to wastewater discharges, the improper disposal of waste, the improper closure of an on-site landfill and the modification of its onsite WWTP without an IEPA permit.

The plant is a federal Superfund site and underwent significant remediation in the early 1990s. The new areas of concern are on property near the former plant.

“The involvement of medical doctors dedicated to the protection of public health allows us to ensure that any public health issues raised are appropriately evaluated and that all of the enforcement and regulatory agencies take the necessary steps to protect the public,” Madigan said.

The Great Lakes Center will augment the scientific resources within state and federal government already involved with the review.

[Return to July 2003 Press Releases](#)