

August 28, 2019

**ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL AND WILL COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY GLASGOW FILE LAWSUIT
AGAINST CHEMICAL MANUFACTURER**

Lawsuit Alleges Fire, Explosions at MPG Industries Resulted in Air, Water Contamination

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul and Will County State's Attorney James Glasgow today filed a lawsuit against MPG Industries, Inc. (MPG) following a massive fire at the company's Will County facility that resulted in air contamination and water pollution.

Raoul and Glasgow filed the lawsuit in Will County Circuit Court following an Aug. 3 fire at the company's warehouse located in New Lenox, Ill. MPG manufactures chemicals using petroleum and oil-based products. According to the complaint, the fire caused smoke, odors, and unknown chemicals and materials to be released into the air. Additionally, water and foam used to extinguish the fire mixed with unknown chemicals, seeped into soil and also drained into a drainage ditch, storm sewers and a farm field. Raoul and Glasgow allege that the released and burned materials remaining at and around the site continue to significantly jeopardize the environment and public health.

The case is being prosecuted by the Attorney General's office in cooperation with the Will County State's Attorney's office, based on a referral from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

"The fire at MPG's New Lenox facility continues to impact the community even after the flames were extinguished," Raoul said. "I appreciate the continued partnership between my office and the Will County State's Attorney's office as we work to protect the environment and residents of Will County."

"We need to vastly improve oversight and coordination among local, state, and federal authorities regarding businesses like MPG that are dealing with highly toxic chemicals. Tragedies like this chemical fire, resulting in both immediate risks to community safety and the very real possibility of longer-term health concerns to those exposed, cannot be allowed to occur," Glasgow said. "We must work together as a community to ensure that all current safety regulations are being followed, and enact any additional safeguards necessary to prevent future environmental tragedies like the MPG catastrophe."

"The company's failure to retain an environmental contractor to properly remediate the impacted areas resulted in Illinois EPA seeking assistance from U.S. EPA to stabilize the areas," said Illinois EPA Director John J. Kim. "MPG Industries is the responsible party and must be held accountable, including the completion of the necessary investigation and related remediation activities for both on and off-site environmental impacts."

According to the lawsuit, MPG stored up to 72 different types of liquid chemicals at its New Lenox facility. Approximately 20 fire departments, including several with trucks specially equipped with foam spray for putting out petroleum-based fires, worked to extinguish the fire even as firefighters observed multiple explosions inside the flame-engulfed buildings. The fire was so large that officials were forced to shut down a portion of Interstate 80. At least one firefighter was admitted to the hospital with suspected lung and liver damage, and all responding firefighters were required to undergo blood testing.

In the lawsuit, Raoul and Glasgow allege that, while the fire caused the release of chemicals into the air, the water and foam used to fight the fire mixed with chemicals at MPG resulted in an unknown amount of chemicals migrating into storm sewers and reaching a soybean field north of I-80. The runoff that reached

the soybean field impacted an area of approximately 2,000 feet by 20 feet, and Raoul and Glasgow allege that all of the affected soybeans died.

Raoul and Glasgow are seeking a preliminary injunction that requires MPG to act immediately to correct the situation. The lawsuit also seeks to require MPG to remediate any remaining contamination, as well as civil penalties, the maximums of which are defined in state statute.

Senior Assistant Attorney General Stephen J. Sylvester and Assistant Attorney General Jamie D. Getz are handling the case for Raoul's Environmental Enforcement Division. Assistant State's Attorneys Mary Tatroe and Matthew Guzman are handling the case for the Will County State's Attorney's office.