

March 10, 2021

**ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL OBTAINS ORDER RELATED TO TAZEWELL COUNTY NURSING HOME
DIESEL LEAK**

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today obtained an order in a lawsuit against Washington Senior Living LLC and SC Washington Property LLC over a diesel gas leak that led to residents being evacuated from a senior living facility. The leak caused air and soil contamination on the property as well as in water in a nearby tributary that connects to the Illinois River.

Raoul previously filed a lawsuit and motion for preliminary injunction in Tazewell County Circuit Court to require Washington Senior Living and SC Washington Property to evaluate and address contamination resulting from a diesel fuel leak at the companies' Washington Senior Living care facility located at 1201 Newcastle Road in Washington, Illinois. The facility provides long-term, short-term and hospice care in Tazewell County.

According to Raoul's lawsuit, the facility reported Dec. 30, 2020, that a diesel fuel leak had been discovered two days earlier. Strong fumes resulting from the leak caused 35 residents to be evacuated for several hours and some to be relocated within the facility. Raoul alleged the defendants did not take necessary actions as requested by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) to address the diesel release, and the agreed order was entered today after a contested hearing.

"The diesel fuel leak exposed Washington Senior Living residents to hazardous fumes, and the companies did not take adequate steps to address contamination," Raoul said. "This order will require the companies to take steps to evaluate and address any lingering contamination, and ensure residents are safe from the harmful effects of diesel pollution."

The Attorney General's office filed the lawsuit in January based on a referral from IEPA.

"The Illinois EPA referred this case due to concerns from dangerous conditions brought on by improper discharges," said Illinois EPA Director John Kim. "The action taken by the Attorney General's office to permanently cease these discharges and ensure necessary remediation is completed will bring protections to the affected members of the public and the environment."

Washington Senior Living relies on a generator as a backup power source, and diesel fuel for the generator was being stored in an aboveground tank on-site. According to Raoul's lawsuit, inspectors from the IEPA visited the facility Dec. 31 and discovered a strong diesel fuel odor. Further investigation found that diesel fuel had seeped into the soil and the city of Washington's storm water system. The storm water system drains to a tributary of Farm Creek, which ultimately flows to the Illinois River.

Diesel fuel is a combustible liquid that emits odors and fumes containing air pollutants, including volatile organic compounds. Exposure to diesel fuel can cause both short-term and long-term human health effects. When exposed to the environment, diesel fuel also can contaminate soil, groundwater, and surface waters, rendering them hazardous to humans and wildlife.

[The order entered today](#) requires the defendants to take immediate action to address the pollution in and outside of the facility by removing all petroleum-contaminated material from the release's drainage path and employing equipment to clean the air inside the facility. The order also requires the defendants to submit plans to investigate and remediate all contamination from the release to the Attorney General's office and the IEPA.

Assistant Attorneys General Emma Hudspath and Chelsea Neilson are handling the case for Raoul's Environmental Bureau.