

June 14, 2022

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL ANNOUNCES RESOLUTION TO LAWSUIT AGAINST AB SPECIALTY SILICONES

Litigation Filed Following 2019 Fatal Waukegan Chemical Plant Explosion

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today announced a consent order that brings to a conclusion litigation against AB Specialty Silicones over a deadly explosion at the company's Waukegan, Illinois facility in 2019.

Raoul filed the lawsuit with the Lake County State's Attorney's office after a May 3, 2019 explosion killed four workers and released unknown quantities of chemicals into the surrounding environment. [The consent order](#) prohibits the company's Waukegan facility from producing certain hydrogen-releasing silicone emulsion products, including the product that was manufactured when the plant exploded.

"In many ways, the Waukegan community was forever changed by this explosion, which resulted in contamination of the surrounding environment but even more tragically, the loss of lives," Raoul said. "The consent order ensures AB Specialty Silicones is held responsible for the tragedy, and I hope it brings some healing to the community."

An agreed preliminary injunction entered in October 2019 required AB Specialty Silicones to investigate and evaluate the environmental impact of contaminants released in the explosion and fire, and clean up any contamination with oversight by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA). The consent order resolves the lawsuit by requiring AB Specialty Silicones to pay all IEPA oversight costs and a civil penalty of \$40,000. The consent order also acknowledges the completion of the required remedial action laid out in the 2019 injunction.

"This final consent order marks the completion of remediation efforts necessary to address the vast environmental impacts that resulted from the devastating explosion at AB Specialty Silicones," Illinois EPA Director John J. Kim said. "It is important that the State bring all its resources together to address significant incidents such as this to ensure that the full extent of environmental contamination is addressed and remediated in accordance with environmental regulations."

Raoul and the Lake County State's Attorney's office filed the lawsuit May 31, 2019 in Lake County Circuit Court against AB Specialty Silicones, which manufactures silicon derivative products. Raoul's complaint alleged that the May 3 fire and explosion at the company's Waukegan manufacturing facility resulted in an unknown amount of chemicals being released into the air, causing air pollution and threatening land and water near the facility. Additionally, the complaint alleged that contaminants released by the explosion and water used to extinguish the fire allowed chemicals to seep into storm sewers, contaminating a wetland and Osprey Lake, located approximately one mile away from the plant.

Raoul's lawsuit was based on a referral from the IEPA. In the immediate aftermath of the explosion, the IEPA worked with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to address any immediate risks to public health and the environment.

The Attorney General's office enforces Illinois' environmental protection laws. Attorney General Raoul's Environmental Enforcement Division, which enforces civil environmental laws, has recovered millions of dollars from polluters and required companies to undertake environmental improvement projects in

communities impacted by pollution. Raoul encourages residents to report environmental justice and other environmental concerns to his office by emailing ei@ilag.gov.

Senior Assistant Attorney General Christopher Grant and Assistant Attorney General Nancy Tikalsky handled the case for Raoul's Environmental Enforcement Division.