

May 31, 2019

**ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL AND LAKE COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY NERHEIM FILE LAWSUIT
OVER FATAL WAUKEGAN CHEMICAL PLANT EXPLOSION**

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul and State's Attorney Michael G. Nerheim today filed a lawsuit against AB Specialty Silicones in Waukegan, Ill. over a May 3 explosion that killed four people and released unknown quantities of chemicals into the surrounding area.

Raoul and Nerheim's offices filed the complaint in Lake County Circuit Court against AB Specialty Silicones, which manufactures silicon derivative products. Raoul's complaint alleges that a fire and explosion that occurred at the company's Waukegan manufacturing facility around 9:30 p.m. on May 3 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 alleges 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.

"This explosion was tragic, and my thoughts are with the families who lost loved ones as a result," Raoul said. "As the community continues to recover from the trauma of this event, I have filed this lawsuit to protect residents and the environment from any chemical contamination."

"My thoughts and prayers continue to go out to the workers and families affected by this tragic event. We will work diligently with the Illinois Attorney General's office, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to seek remediation of any environmental impacts as a result of the explosion," State's Attorney Nerheim said.

Raoul's lawsuit is based on a referral from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA). The IEPA is working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to address any immediate risks to public health and the environment.

"Beyond the immediate devastation caused by this catastrophic explosion, our investigation has identified the release of chemicals impacting the environment and visible impacts to nearby wetlands and Osprey Lake," Illinois EPA Acting Director John J. Kim said. "Today's complaint is an important step to ensure the full extent of contamination is identified and proper remediation is made."

Raoul's lawsuit seeks an injunction requiring AB Specialty Silicones to immediately secure the site and ensure that all chemicals remaining inside the damaged manufacturing and storage buildings are removed. The lawsuit also seeks to require the company to investigate and identify the extent of contamination in all areas that may have been impacted, and to remediate land and water contamination. Additionally, the lawsuit seeks civil penalties.

Senior Assistant Attorney General Christopher Grant and Assistant Attorney General Nancy Tikalsky are handling the case for Raoul's Environmental Enforcement Division, and Assistant State's Attorney Lisle Stalter is handling the case for the Lake County State's Attorney's office.