



PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 24th, 2019

Contact: neighbors4environmentaljustice@gmail.com
Website: n4ej.org // Twitter: @N4EJChicago // FB: [fb.com/n4ejchicago](https://www.facebook.com/n4ejchicago)

Neighbors Furious as Illinois EPA Ignores Pollution Permit Regulations

Chicago, IL- The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) is allowing controversial polluter MAT Asphalt to keep operating despite the expiration of their permit on July 2nd, 2019. The temporary “construction permit” issued to the company in 2017 explicitly limited their operations to “one year from the date of initial startup.” Furious residents say the agency is ignoring its own rules and dozens of air quality complaints filed in the first year of the plant’s operation.

“Much like the U.S. EPA, their priority continues to be protecting businesses instead of the public. The IEPA already ignored their own procedures when they issued the construction permit,” said Robert Beedle of Neighbors for Environmental Justice (N4EJ). “Now that the permit has expired, the IEPA appears to be making it up as they go along while we pay the price on a daily basis.”

IEPA emails show that in 2017, agency staff largely skipped the environmental justice review required by state law when they approved a permit for MAT Asphalt to build the facility, which is located across the street from a 69 acre park and [less than 1000 feet](#) from an elementary school. One employee wrote, “...we dropped the ball... we effectively have until Friday to process this application.”

Now MAT Asphalt is applying for a 5 year permit. Their first application was rejected for failing to include fugitive dust, [which would have put their emissions at “major source” levels](#). MAT claimed they miscalculated and resubmitted lower numbers to the agency. The IEPA has promised to release a draft permit, followed by a minimum 45 day period before a public hearing and extended public comment period.

However skeptical residents fear the agency plans to issue the permit no matter what evidence is presented about the clear negative impact on the neighboring park, businesses, schools, and homes. They say the decision to let the plant keep polluting without a permit is evidence that the hearings are just a formality, meant to provide the appearance of fairness before the IEPA announces a decision that has already been made.

“We’re entrusting a government agency that can’t even reliably mail notification letters or respond to email requests to protect the health of Illinois residents,” said Beedle. “I think every person living in Illinois should be extremely concerned about how this agency is being run and what their true priorities are.”

The construction permit expired on July 2nd. A draft of the proposed 5 year permit has not yet been released.