

# Gasp Responds to Corruption and Bribery Charges Related to North Birmingham

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**The following is a statement from Gasp Executive Director Michael Hansen regarding corruption & bribery charges related to North Birmingham:**

I was stunned to learn the [extent of the conspiracy](#) involving former-Rep. Oliver Robinson, Balch & Bingham, and Drummond Company to block EPA's efforts to remediate contamination in northern Birmingham and Tarrant. We learned via Twitter that meetings with Robinson and Gasp representatives were recorded and shared with Drummond and their attorneys.

Gasp has been working in north Birmingham neighborhoods for years. In 2014, we petitioned the EPA to investigate whether or not additional cleanup was necessary in the Inglenook community and city of Tarrant. Between advocating for the National Priorities List (NPL) for the 35th Avenue Site (the NPL listing would have released millions of dollars for clean up) and additional testing in the Pinson Valley Site, we've been at odds with some of the most powerful interests in Alabama for years now.

This case is a sad commentary on the lengths to which unchecked greed will go for a buck. People deserve to live in a healthy community, including clean air, clean water, and clean soil. Residents have been complaining of respiratory illnesses, cancers, asthma, and other diseases. Despite Birmingham's reputation for being a hub of medical advances, there has never been a study to see how the pollution is harming the communities' health. We know there is a higher rate of pre-term birth and lower birth weight in the areas near heavy industry.

Toxic pollution literally kills people and makes them ill. Attempts at covering up pollution and avoiding responsibility for cleaning it up are among the most egregious forms of public corruption, and it must be rooted out.

This story is not simply about corruption. It is about harm to real people. For decades, people living near ABC Coke and other polluting industries have been breathing toxic emissions and growing gardens in contaminated soil.

They've been telling us for years that they believe their families, their children are being exposed to serious environmental hazards and that their health is suffering from it. Everyone from the polluters to politicians to regulators turned a blind eye to these concerns, claiming there is no health risk. Well, now we know why.

The folks living in impacted communities deserve answers. Who else was involved in this scheme and how long has it been going on? How deep is this conspiracy? Will others be held accountable? Why aren't the leaders in our state condemning these actions? What recourse do the residents have now that they know powerful interests conspired to thwart community cleanup efforts?

We won't rest until we have answers and the residents of the northern Birmingham area are protected from toxic pollution and corruption.