

As Dothan moves closer to landfill expansion, some residents still challenging

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The Alabama Department of Environmental Management has granted the City of Dothan a permit to expand its landfill, but some residents are still challenging the project.

According to attorney David A. Ludder of Tallahassee, Florida, seven residents in the Webb Road area contend ADEM violated numerous sections of Alabama's code when it granted Dothan's request for a modification of its landfill permit to include an expansion on Nov. 1. Dothan officials have been involved in a five-year process to expand the landfill, located on Webb Road, since it appeared to be reaching capacity.



Since May 2014 the city has been hauling its garbage to a transfer station on Mance Newton Road, where a company has collected and transported it to the landfill in Campbellton, Florida, according to an earlier Eagle report. The initial cost of the contract with Waste Away Group – a division of Waste management – was \$37 per ton, and city officials budgeted more than \$900,000 per year for the first full year of the contract.

While the project has had several hurdles, ADEM's approval of the permit would allow the city to move forward with the construction of the expansion. Ludder, an environmental lawyer, filed a "Request for Hearing to contest" the action on behalf of his clients on Dec. 1, according to the filing posted on his website.

Ludder and his clients – Michael, David F. and Peggy R. Del Vecchio, Bobby Lewis, Charles Childree, Vicki Ammons and Michael LeBleu – argue the landfill expansion would cause a variety of issues to them and their properties. Included in the "threatened or actual injuries suffered" are complaints the landfill would generate "fugitive dust" that would impact vehicles and homes, produce odors that are harmful to their health and attract animals like vultures and insects that have been known to carry diseases.

Additionally, the administrative filing argues that ADEM allowed some amendments to the permit that violate the state's code, including how the waste material is covered, how groundwater is monitored and how liners are constructed and/or installed. The document also notes a portion of the expansion would cross into wetlands, another violation of Alabama's code.

The document also recommended the changes that should be made to make sure the project is compliant.