

EPA Grants GASP Petition to Investigate in Tarrant



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The federal agency announced that it has granted a July request by GASP to conduct a preliminary assessment in the Birmingham suburb

TARRANT, Ala. (Oct. 9, 2014) — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has notified GASP that it has granted a July 1, 2014, petition to perform a preliminary assessment of the hazards to public health and the environment associated with the release of hazardous substances.

In a letter to GASP, Randall Chaffins, acting director of the EPA Superfund Division wrote, "The agency has carefully reviewed GASP's petition and finds that sufficient facts and details were provided to warrant a [preliminary assessment] to determine if a threat

to the public or the environment exists in Tarrant.” The letter comes on the heels of a resolution^[2] sponsored by Jefferson County Commissioner Joe Knight, who represents Tarrant, to oppose the request.

The assessment, which will be completed by July 2015, is the first step in determining whether or not an area is a threat to public health and warrants further investigation. Tarrant is home to ABC Coke, one of the named potentially responsible parties for the 35th Avenue Superfund Site. Tarrant was not included when the EPA initially investigated the areas in northern Birmingham that are now part of that site.

GASP is currently appealing the Jefferson County Board of Health's decision to re-issue the ABC Coke permit without significant reductions to air pollution.^[3]

“In the absence of appropriate action by the Jefferson County Department of Health, GASP petitioned the EPA to assess the dangers to people living in proximity to Drummonds ABC Coke plant,” said Executive Director Stacie M. Propst, PhD. “We’re pleased that the EPA is taking this step to help the hard working people of Tarrant.”

The EPA is hosting a stakeholders meeting^[4] tonight at Trinity CME Church (3313 Shuttlesworth Dr., Birmingham, AL 35207) at 6 p.m. to discuss its proposal to add the 35th Avenue Superfund Site to the National Priorities List a step beyond^[5] the ongoing Superfund clean up.

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