

# Dothan residents trying to stop landfill expansion



The Boy and I had a manly man errand this afternoon, taking a load of stuff to the city landfill.

By Kim Allen | Posted: Thu 4:56 PM, Feb 04, 2016 | Updated: Thu 5:59 PM, Feb 04, 2016

**DOTHAN, AL - (WTVY)** An environmental attorney out of Tallahassee is representing two more people from Dothan, regarding the city's proposed landfill expansion. Attorney David Ludder represents Bobby Lewis and Michael Del Vecchio.

They're requesting a hearing in front of the Alabama Environmental Management commission to contest the Alabama Department of Environmental Management's plan to expand the Dothan landfill.

Lewis and Del Vecchio each live less than one mile from the landfill and claim expansion would infringe even further upon their current residences. They both claim expanding the landfill would;

1. Create offensive odors that could affect their health.
2. Create an environment where disease is more easily spread.
3. Create a scenario where dust from the landfill will cover their property.
4. Cause excessive noise from operation of heavy equipment.
5. Damage property value

The hearing request also claims that the proposed expansion would violate several Alabama codes, including;

1. Placing landfills in wetlands
2. Discharging pollution into the water system
3. Covering portions of the landfill with materials other than earth
4. Creating two working faces to the landfill, instead of one mandated face that is as small as possible
5. Grading to steep

The hearing request calls on the Alabama Environmental Management Commission to grant relief to both parties, by preventing a landfill in wetlands, preventing pollution in the water supply and forcing the landfill to use only earth to cover layers of garbage.

This request comes one day after Ludder filed a civil rights complaint on behalf of at least nine people who live near the landfill. That group, whose names have been redacted, is asking the Environmental Protection Agency to investigate ADEM's expansion plan.

They claim the plan discriminates against black residents. The group says African-Americans make up nearly 90-percent of the population within one mile of the proposed expansion.

The complaint cites the EPA's regulations that prohibit discrimination, and encourages the EPA to take financial action if a civil rights violation is found to have occurred.

In the complaint document, Ludder writes, "If a violation is found and ADEM is unable to demonstrate a substantial, legitimate justification for its action and unwilling to voluntarily implement a less discriminatory alternative that is practicable, Complainants petition EPA to initiate proceedings to deny, annul, suspend, or terminate EPA financial assistance to ADEM."

The Complainants make similar claims as Lewis and Del Vecchio, saying a landfill expansion would lead to increased odor, disease potential, noise and a decreased property value.

The Dothan landfill is located east of Dothan, near housing developments just off the Ross Clark Circle. All garbage from Dothan is currently going to a landfill in Campbellton, Florida because the Dothan landfill is currently  at capacity. That arrangement will continue until the proposed landfill expansion is complete.

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