



## EPA to look into possible health hazards in area city; despite opposition from Jefferson County Commission

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(file photo)

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama -- Despite opposition from the Jefferson County Commission and other area cities the EPA will perform a preliminary assessment into potential environmental hazards to public health in the city of Tarrant.

Officials with the health advocacy group GASP said they were **notified today that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency would look into the group's petition** to investigate residential areas in Tarrant to be a superfund site.

"This is the first step in the process of investigating possible toxic contamination," said Michael Hansen, communications specialist for GASP.

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.

On Thursday, the Jefferson County commission voted to oppose the GASP petition. **County officials had argued that recent studies have been conducted that show no health risks in areas near the city.**

Stacie M. Propst, executive director of GASP said in a statement, "We're pleased that the EPA is taking this step to help the hard working people of Tarrant."

The EPA assessment is expected to be completed by July 2015 and is designed to see whether a threat to public health exists that could warrant further investigation, according to GASP.

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