



EXECUTIVE
DEPARTMENT

CITY OF SOUTH PORTLAND

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PRESS RELEASE

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South Portland Partners with Maine DEP for Air Quality Monitoring

SOUTH PORTLAND, ME – The City of South Portland and Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will roll out short-term air quality monitoring tests over the next month to better ascertain the condition of the air in South Portland.

Starting the week of June 10th, the DEP will begin the process of locating six air quality monitoring devices at various locations in South Portland. On at least a weekly basis, the devices will sample air quality over a 24-hour period. Each location will collect samples over the next few months and the results will be analyzed by the DEP at its Air Lab in Augusta. The analysis will test for over 50 different types of Hazardous Air Pollutants (HAPs). HAPs are a subset of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and the DEP issues licenses to various businesses for how many specific HAPs and total tons of VOCs can be emitted into the air in a given year.

In addition to the six fixed locations, DEP will also provide several canisters that are able to capture immediate air quality samples. These canisters take approx. 30 seconds to fill and can be used in the presence of strong odors to help measure HAP levels. The South Portland Fire Department will be given these canisters for when they respond to complaints of odors. Individual residents can also obtain canisters so that they can collect an immediate air sample, as well. DEP will provide training to interested residents on Monday, June 10 at 6:30 pm at City Hall.

Results of the fixed location and immediate monitoring samples will be compared to federal and state limits and then reviewed by the State's Toxicologist to help determine potential health concerns. The findings will be presented at a City Council workshop on Tuesday, August 20. These findings will help the City and DEP determine what next steps are necessary, including longer-term monitoring efforts.

"We appreciate the seriousness with which the DEP staff are treating the air quality concerns of South Portland residents," said Mayor Claude Morgan. "The City and DEP working collaboratively will result in much better information in the short-term, and better monitoring in the long-term to help ensure that the air we're breathing is clean."

Although air quality has long been a concern for South Portland officials, the issue took on renewed importance earlier this year when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a

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proposed consent decree that it had reached with Global Partners for alleged violations of the Clean Air Act that occurred at its South Portland facility. The complaint filed by EPA alleges that Global: failed to obtain an emissions license that addresses VOCs from heated asphalt and No. 6 oil storage tanks, exceeded total VOC emission limits under their existing DEP license, failed to take appropriate VOC emission control measures, and failed to apply for an operating permit. The agreed upon consent decree calls for a \$40,000 fine, a limit of four heated bulk storage tanks containing either No. 6 oil or asphalt at the facility, limiting throughputs to 50 million gallons/year of No. 6 oil and 75 million gallons/year of asphalt, the installation of mist eliminators on vents at each heated bulk storage tank and operating these eliminators at all times while the tanks and are heated and/or receiving product, putting \$150,000 into a fund to replace or retrofit wood-burning appliances in Cumberland County, and applying for an amended license with DEP incorporating these (or more stringent) changes.

South Portland's City Council filed a response to the consent decree, in which it requested a number of changes, including: increasing the \$40,000 fine and having it be paid to the City; augmenting the supplemental measures by requiring the installation of the best commercially available equipment to eliminate VOC emissions to the maximum extent possible, as well as noxious odors; scrapping the woodstove program and replacing it with one that funds air quality monitoring, a public health survey, a public health officer position, and incentivizing the installation of greener heating and cooling equipment for low-to-moderate income households.

A number of members of the public also submitted comments. The (extended) deadline to submit comments is July 1. Members of the public can do so by emailing them to pubcommentees.enrd@usdoj.gov or mailing them to Assistant Attorney General, U.S. DOJ—ENRD, P.O. Box 7611, Washington, DC, 20044-7611, and referencing United States v. Global Partners LP, et al., D.J. Ref. No. 90-5-2-1-11428.

For more information, please contact City Manager Scott Morelli at smorelli@southportland.org or (207) 767-7606.