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**MAYOR EMANUEL, CITY OF CHICAGO FILE LAWSUIT AGAINST
US STEEL FOR CLEAN WATER ACT VIOLATIONS**

Indiana Facility Experienced Multiple Chemical Spills in 2017

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago Corporation Counsel Ed Siskel today announced that the City of Chicago has filed a lawsuit against U.S. Steel for violating the federal Clean Water Act by allowing the discharge of pollutants into Lake Michigan from the corporation's facility in Portage, Indiana. This lawsuit is being filed 60 days after Chicago [sent a notice of intent to sue](#).

"Chicagoans rely on Lake Michigan for our drinking water, as an economic engine and as a recreational asset. This Great Lake is our most precious natural resource and we must preserve and protect it, while taking steps to punish those who pollute it," said Mayor Emanuel. "We will not stand idly by as U.S. Steel repeatedly disregards and violates federal laws and puts our greatest natural resource at risk."

The lawsuit asks for injunctive relief and civil penalties against U.S. Steel for the discharge of pollutants in violation of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and in violation of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits issued to U.S. Steel.

"We are bringing this lawsuit to protect Chicago residents and the more than 5 million Illinois residents who rely on Lake Michigan as their source of drinking water," said Corporation Counsel Siskel. "After multiple spills in 2017, we do not believe that U.S. Steel is acting responsibly and in compliance with the Clean Water Act."

U.S. Steel's Midwest Plant is located on Burns Waterway, a small industrial ditch, into which the facility discharges both wastewater and stormwater, and which empties directly into Lake Michigan. U.S. Steel is responsible for processing its wastewater in accordance with

the terms of its NPDES permit, and U.S. Steel has repeatedly violated pollutant-discharge and maintenance provisions in its permit during the past five years.

In April 2017, a broken pipe and a corroded collection trough resulted in a spill, reported by U.S. Steel as consisting of approximately 350 pounds of total chromium, of which nearly 300 pounds was carcinogenic hexavalent chromium. According to IDEM reports, U.S. Steel failed to notify any downstream users of the waters affected by the April 2017 chromium spill.

In October 2017, U.S. Steel again illegally discharged an excessive amount of chromium. Despite a third-party contractor working for U.S. Steel observing a blue discharge with visible solids, U.S. Steel did not test to see how much of the total chromium discharged was comprised of the more toxic hexavalent chromium. In addition, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management did not conduct an accident inspection related to the October 2017 incident until approximately three weeks later, on November 16. Chicago only learned from after-the-fact newspaper accounts of this additional illegal chromium discharge into Lake Michigan by US Steel's Midwest Plant. Unlike the illegal discharge of chromium in April, 2017, the Chicago did not receive any notification from U.S. Steel or any regulatory agency concerning the unlawful October chromium discharge.

Receiving early and timely notification is imperative to the City's ability to take effective actions to avoid having the City's water intake and distribution system contaminated by U.S. Steel's illegal discharges and to protect public health. U.S. Steel's failure to provide the City with timely notification of U.S. Steel's illegal discharges and other violations alleged herein pose an unacceptable and continuing risk of harm to the City's ability to provide safe drinking water to its over 5 million citizens and suburban water purchasers.

In November, the City sent a NOI to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), the state agency that regulates entities with NPDES permits in Indiana, as well as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency .

This litigation is just the latest action taken by Mayor Emanuel to protect Chicago's natural resources. As one of his first acts as a Congressman, the Mayor introduced the Great Lakes Restoration Act, which has funded \$1.7 billion in preservation for the Great Lakes. Under the Mayor's leadership, Chicago has enacted some of the strongest environmental protections, including some of the strongest bulk materials regulations for storage and handling in the nation. The Emanuel administration has banned new petcoke and coal facilities, and has prohibited the expansion of existing facilities. Further, Mayor Emanuel created the "Climate Change is Real," website, putting information from the U.S. EPA's Climate Change Website on the City of Chicago's servers after the Trump administration removed the content from federal websites.

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