

Illinois EPA Refers Superior Battery Inc. To Attorney General

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SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) has referred an enforcement action to the Illinois Attorney General’s Office against Superior Battery Inc., located at 919 East Benton Street, Morris (Grundy County). The referral cites violations of the Illinois Environmental Protection Act and Illinois Pollution Control Board Regulations related to the release or potential release of pollutants to the atmosphere and water, and to improper waste handling.

On June 29, 2021, a fire broke out at the building owned and operated by Superior Battery Inc. Initial reports to the Morris Fire Department indicated the building contained approximately 180,000 to 200,000 pounds of lithium batteries. The fire produced smoke containing potentially dangerous substances. The smoke plume prompted an evacuation order by local authorities of a one-square mile radius around the facility, affecting approximately 1,000 homes. Personnel from multiple federal, state, and local agencies and organizations are responding to the fire.

In the referral, Illinois EPA alleges Superior Battery Inc. has caused, threatened, or allowed the discharging of contaminants to the air and water, and disposed or abandoned waste at an unregulated facility. Additional violations may be added as the Agency gathers more information about the fire and Superior Battery Inc.'s management of the lithium batteries.

The referral asks the Attorney General to pursue legal action and require Superior Battery Inc. to take a number of actions, including obtain a consultant to determine the cause of the fire; cease and/or prevent releases from the site; contain any runoff and prevent any off-site discharge of water; provide a detailed inventory of site materials and a description of the processes performed at the site; identify any waste streams generated at the site; provide an estimate of air contaminants emitted as a result of the fire; develop and implement plans to properly remove and dispose of wastes from the site; retain an environmental contractor to perform on- and off-site investigation and remediation; and establish procedures to prevent future re-occurrences.