

# **Attorney General Raoul Files Lawsuit Against Marathon Pipe Line LLC Over Oil Spill**

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CHICAGO— Attorney General Kwame Raoul today announced a lawsuit against Marathon Pipe Line LLC (Marathon) alleging that the company created a substantial danger to the environment and public health and welfare when crude oil was released from a pipeline near Edwardsville, Illinois.

Raoul's lawsuit was filed in Madison County Circuit Court and includes allegations of creating a substantial danger to the environment and public health and welfare, water pollution, creating offensive conditions, open dumping and waste disposal at an improper facility. Raoul's lawsuit alleges Marathon violated the Illinois Environmental Protection Act and endangered public health and the environment by causing or allowing a discharge of heavy crude oil to Cahokia Creek in an area that includes residential neighborhoods, commercial properties, agricultural properties, forested areas and a wetland.

"Marathon's significant oil spill has created a public health risk by exposing the community to heavy crude oil. The spill has also severely harmed the environment – including wildlife, surrounding wetlands and waterways," Raoul said. "The long-lasting impact of this oil spill could be detrimental if not properly and quickly remediated. I am committed to ensuring that Marathon is held accountable for the damage it has already done and preventing it from causing further harm to the public's health and the environment."

Raoul's lawsuit is based on a referral from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA).

"This release from a Marathon pipeline resulted in significant environmental impacts to Cahokia Creek, surrounding wetlands, and wildlife. As a result, it has required a response from Illinois EPA and other state, local, and federal agencies to monitor and ensure proper steps are taken to identify the extent of contamination in the environmental and begin remediation," IEPA Director John J. Kim said. "We will continue working the Attorney General's Office to ensure Marathon fulfills its obligation to address and remediate all environmental impacts resulting from this release."

Marathon operates approximately 6,000 miles of underground pipelines in 14 states, including Illinois. The underground pipelines transport crude oil and petroleum products to and from terminals, refineries, and other pipelines. Among those pipelines, Marathon operates a line that runs from Wood River, Illinois to Patoka, Illinois - known as the Woodpat line - which was carrying heavy crude oil at the time of the release. Heavy crude oil is highly viscous and cannot easily flow from production wells under normal reservoir conditions.

Crude oil is toxic to aquatic organisms and plants, affecting respiration, feeding, and thermo-regulation in wildlife. In humans, inhalation of fumes from crude oil is known to cause chemical pneumonia; irritation of the nose, throat and lungs; headaches; dizziness; drowsiness; loss of coordination; fatigue; nausea and labored breathing.

According to Raoul's lawsuit, on March 11, an oil refinery reported to the National Response Center oil of unknown origin in Cahokia Creek, which flows to the Mississippi River. Later that morning, Marathon reported a release of crude oil from the Woodpat line, due to equipment failure, which spilled into Cahokia Creek near Edwardsville. Marathon reported that the pipeline released 3,900 barrels of crude oil. Raoul alleges that the pipeline released an estimated 163,800 gallons of heavy crude oil to soil, wetlands and Cahokia Creek, killing at least 10 animals and impacting at least 1.6 acres of wetland and 7 miles of Cahokia Creek.

Raoul's lawsuit seeks to require that Marathon immediately cease and desist from causing or allowing the release of heavy crude oil from the pipeline. Raoul also seeks to order Marathon to immediately undertake corrective action that will result in a final and permanent abatement of the substantial danger to the environment and public health, and of violations of the Illinois Environmental Protection Act. Additionally, the lawsuit seeks civil penalties of \$50,000 for each violation of the Illinois Environmental Protection Act and Illinois Pollution Control Board regulations, as well as an additional penalty of \$10,000 for each day of each violation. Raoul's lawsuit also seeks recovery of costs the IEPA incurred in responding to the release.

Assistant Attorneys General Emma Hudspath and Chelsea K. Neilson are handling the case for Raoul's Environmental Bureau.