

State Will Not Proceed with Brighton Park Shelter Site Due to Environmental Concerns

by Submitted by Gov. Pritzker's Office
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CHICAGO – Following a thorough review by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) of the Brighton Park environmental report, the State of Illinois will not proceed with an asylum seeker shelter at the 38th and California site. IEPA cited concerns related to insufficient soil sampling and remediation. Given the significant time required to conduct additional sampling, to process and analyze results, and to implement corresponding further remediation, the State will work with the City to identify alternate shelter options.

The State is expediting efforts to launch the previously announced brick-and-mortar shelter site in Little Village with plans to have 200 beds available to families and people with disabilities. Since the City of Chicago selected the Brighton Park site, the State has requested alternate sites from the City as any additional shelter will operate as part of the City's current shelter system. The State is also working with the Archdiocese of Chicago to explore additional options for brick-and-mortar shelter sites.

“My administration is committed to keeping asylum seekers safe as we work to help them achieve independence,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “We will not proceed with housing families on a site where serious environmental concerns are still present. My administration remains committed to a data-driven plan to improve the asylum seeker response and we will continue to coordinate with the City of Chicago as we work to expand available shelter through winter.”

“IEPA would not approve the proposed Brighton Park site for residential use, based on our regulatory standards for remediation of contaminated properties,” **said Illinois EPA Director John J. Kim**. “The well-being of residents and workers at the site is our highest priority, and current and planned site conditions do not adequately reduce risks of human exposure to known and potential environmental conditions.”

IEPA conducted a thorough review of the Environmental Investigation and Corrective Action Summary prepared for the City of Chicago and identified several concerns with the sampling and remediation work performed at the Brighton Park site. IEPA found:

- The limited nature and insufficient number of soil borings conducted at the site does not provide a comprehensive assessment of environmental conditions across the site.
- Additional soil sampling is needed to further determine if there is additional contamination at the site and to fully investigate potential sources of contamination that were identified from historical site use.

The remediations implemented thus far do not satisfy IEPA standards and are insufficient. At a minimum, an expanded engineered barrier between contaminated soil and human exposure would need to be installed to address exposure concerns. Further investigation might also identify additional contamination that would require additional remediation.

Using IEPA's Site Remediation Program guidelines, the insufficient sampling and remediation at the Brighton Park site does not meet State cleanup standards for residential use.