



KENT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kent County DPW Investigates Methane Gas Migration

KENTWOOD - The closed Kentwood Landfill is under regular monitoring by the Kent County Department of Public Works (DPW) with oversight by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Methane gas naturally forms in landfills. Recently, testing near the site at 4900 Walma SE in Kentwood found methane underground at various depths to the west of the landfill site. Although the migration of methane beyond the landfill boundary is of concern, there has been no detection of methane inside any neighboring buildings.

Kent County DPW consulted with environmental health experts at the Kent County Health Department regarding the findings. They say methane is non-toxic and dissipates quickly when it is exposed to air, but it can be flammable, specifically when trapped in closed-in spaces.

“Safety is our priority as we move forward with this investigation,” said Dar Baas, Director of the Kent County Department of Public Works. “We are hiring an engineering consultant and have already started investigating methods to resolve the gas migration. We also have been in contact with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the EPA.” Efforts to resolve the migration are expected to start before September 1.

The City of Kentwood is installing additional gas detection equipment within the neighboring city buildings to ensure the safety of staff and guests as a precautionary measure. In advance of the permanent devices being installed, Kent County DPW is conducting air quality monitoring with portable testing equipment.

While there is no indication that the migration has moved very far from the landfill, the Kent County DPW will notify about 150 residents who live nearby in the coming days. Residents within 1500-feet of the landfill’s western boundary will be able to request quick, on-site testing for methane through the Kent County DPW at no cost to the homeowner. Those who live in that area will be notified to arrange testing.

Kent County Department of Public Works will hold a Question and Answer session on Wednesday, August 31 at 7:00 p.m. at Kentwood City Hall, 4900 Breton Ave. SE. Officials from the City of Kentwood will also be at the meeting to answer questions. The meeting is open to the public. Anyone with questions can contact the Kent County Department of Public Works at 616.632.7920.

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