

# **ArcelorMittal Agrees To Clean Up IN Waste**

Rick Callahan, Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Indiana environmental groups have reached a settlement with ArcelorMittal and state regulators requiring the steelmaker to clean up more than 3 million tons of waste piled up along Lake Michigan.

A copy of the settlement signed Monday by attorneys for ArcelorMittal, the state and the two environmental groups — Save the Dunes and the Hoosier Environmental Council — was obtained Friday by The Associated Press before its release by state regulators.

The settlement ends a legal challenge to a state permit for a new landfill at the plant. It requires ArcelorMittal to develop and implement a plan for managing steelmaking waste stored in piles at its Burns Harbor complex about 20 miles east of Chicago. It also requires the company to sample and analyze the soil beneath sludge as that waste is moved to an on-site landfill and to test groundwater for contaminants.

ArcelorMittal released a brief statement Friday about the settlement, saying it is "pleased to be moving forward" with its plans to establish a landfill at the Burns Harbor complex.

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management did not immediately return a message seeking comment.

Environmental attorney Kim Ferraro said the settlement will protect the environment and public health from toxic materials such as cadmium, chromium, benzene and arsenic, which are known to occur in the type of wastes dumped by the company near Lake Michigan's shoreline.

Although ArcelorMittal does not admit to any unlawful acts in the settlement, Ferraro said the company and its predecessors dumped waste outdoors for years in violation of federal and state regulations.

Ferraro said the materials were stored outdoors with no environmental protections near the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, a federally protected park that's a popular summer tourist destination. The settlement goes "a long way toward eliminating that ongoing threat of contamination" to the area, she said.

The settlement comes two years after Ferraro, on behalf of Michigan City-based Save the Dunes, appealed a state permit awarded to ArcelorMittal. That appeal contended the permit allowing ArcelorMittal to build a waste-disposal landfill at the site lacked environmental controls to keep the waste from polluting the air, land and water until the wastes are moved to the landfill.

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"We impose permit limits on companies to limit their water emissions for parts per billion — teeny tiny amounts that we allow them to actually emit into the lake — and here these millions of tons of contaminants have just been sitting exposed to the lake," Ferraro said. "It's just a clear threat that has been out there for a really long time."

The waste at issue includes 1.8 million tons of secondary wastewater treatment plant sludge and 870,000 tons of blast furnace filter waste dumped next to the Indiana Harbor. The site also contains several hundred thousand tons of new waste created by the mill each year, Ferraro said.

A deal state environmental officials reached last September with ArcelorMittal imposed waste management and control measures and timelines for disposal of the wastes. However, that order did not require the company to test soil following the cleanup of one of the largest waste piles.

The testing was added to the terms the company must follow as part of its settlement with Save the Dunes.

"By bringing this challenge, we arrived at an agreement that protects one of the most unique ecosystems in the world," Nicole Barker, executive director of Save the Dunes, said in a statement. "This settlement is a major win for Lake Michigan, and our region's only national park — the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore."

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