



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SOUTHSIDE RECYCLING, JOINED BY OVER 1,300 STAKEHOLDERS, CALLS FOR MAYOR LIGHTFOOT, CDPH COMMISSIONER ARWADY, AND U.S. EPA'S REGAN TO TOUR NEW FACILITY AND GRANT PERMIT

CHICAGO – More than 1,300 stakeholders, including employees, suppliers, neighbors on the Southeast Side, and other businesses, joined the executives of Southside Recycling and its parent, Reserve Management Group (RMG), in sending a [letter](#) today inviting Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, Chicago Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady, and U.S. EPA Administrator Michael Regan to tour the company's new modern metal recycling facility and grant the final permit needed to begin operating the idle \$80 million private investment.

"We hope that each of you will finally take the time to come see what we have built so that we might be granted a fair chance to set the record straight," wrote RMG CEO Steve Joseph in a two-and-a-half-page letter that was signed by nationwide stakeholders, including many from the recycling, metals, and related industries.

The letter details how the city and federal EPA have catered to the complaints of a small but vocal group of activists who have protested the facility's pending start of operations. This opposition continues despite the multiple permits that have already been issued by the City of Chicago and the Illinois EPA after lengthy review processes that included robust community input.

Further, the letter notes that the undue delay in issuing the final permit is "in clear contravention of a signed agreement between our business and the City of Chicago." The September 2019 agreement between the company and the Lightfoot administration promised that the company would close its metal shredding facility on the city's North Side by the end of 2020, while the city would "reasonably cooperate. . .in achieving the efficient, expeditious transition" to a new facility.

Despite the agreement and previously issued permits, the city in May of this year ultimately suspended its review of RMG's permit application – the first application under Chicago's stringent new Large Recycling Facility rules that were adopted in June of 2020 with Southside Recycling specifically in mind – ostensibly at the behest of U.S. EPA Administrator Regan. RMG's letter says that the delay in issuing the permit has "left our business, hundreds of other businesses in Chicago and the surrounding area, and the lives of thousands of employees and their families in limbo."

The letter acknowledges the legitimate environmental concerns that Southeast Side residents have faced over the years, but notes that RMG, which has operated other recycling businesses on the same campus for more than two decades, has never been the source of these past issues. In addition, the previously issued city and state permits included extensive air modeling and testing of the facility's advanced emissions control equipment that prove RMG's assertions that the business will meet or exceed all applicable environmental standards. The letter states that "[Southside Recycling] will establish a new standard for responsible metal recycling in the United States."

The city is currently in the midst of an "ambiguous and unwarranted" Health Impact Assessment, which so far has consisted of two public sessions and a third planned for next month, after which the city has indicated it intends to issue a decision on the permit. The HIA "lacks any objective standards," according to the letter, and it "not only

goes outside the boundaries of relevant law and regulations, but also ignores and diminishes the significant work and robust analysis already completed.”

The city’s permit delay is actually undermining legitimate concerns over environmental justice because Chicago’s only other shredding facility, Sims Metal Management in Pilsen, continues to operate as Southside Recycling sits idle. This facility, located in another environmental justice area, employs no pollution controls on its shredder and is located closer to homes and schools than RMG’s new operation. The delay is also financially squeezing hundreds of small scrap metal businesses and thousands of individual recyclers who are being paid lower prices for their materials due to the lack of market competition over the last year.

RMG’s proposed new recycling facility is located on 175 well-buffered acres a half-mile from the closest homes and schools. Among Southside Recycling’s many features are an enclosed metal shredder and the best available air quality controls. Emissions will be monitored continuously around-the-clock, giving the state and federal EPAs and the city each the ability to enforce applicable health standards. Recycling obsolete metal contributes to environmental sustainability by reusing resources instead of discarding metal waste in landfills. Recycling metals also conserves natural resources and lessens emissions by reducing the need for energy-intensive mining of virgin minerals from the Earth.

“A tour of the operation will demonstrate with facts and science that we are a model business that is both critical in promoting sustainable economic growth while simultaneously serving as an example of how industry can innovate to protect human and environmental health in order to safely and responsibly coexist with surrounding communities,” the letter concludes.

ABOUT RMG / Southside Recycling

Formed in 1991, Reserve Management Group (RMG) is a family of distinct but related businesses, including Southside Recycling, involved in recycling, scrap metal processing (ferrous metals, non-ferrous metals, electronic scrap), material handling, equipment sales, and property management, operating in 10 states. More information can be found at www.reserve-group.com and at <https://www.southside-recycling.com/>.

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