



Air monitoring tests reveal other pollution sources in Hillcrest

EnviroServ remains committed to addressing the emissions from the Shongweni landfill site and would like to share new information with the community.

Recent data from three real-time air quality monitors newly installed in communities surrounding the Shongweni Landfill has revealed the presence of a pollutant in the form of sulfur dioxide.

Independent experts have scrutinised the data and concur with the EnviroServ Group technical team that the high levels of sulfur dioxide detected and which are impacting the Winston Park, Hillcrest, KwaNdengezi and Assagay areas are caused by the combustion of sulfur containing materials.

EnviroServ has installed a total of five air quality monitors in an effort to better understand emissions impacting the communities surrounding the landfill site. The monitors are equipped to measure wind direction and speed as well as various gaseous pollutants.

“Sulfur dioxide is typically produced by combustion processes, and is not found as a gaseous pollutant from landfill sites. No combustion of waste or waste related materials occurs at the Shongweni landfill,” said EnviroServ Group Technical Specialist Dr Johan Schoonraad. Scientific opinion is backed up by wind direction data which shows that it is impossible for this odorous pollutant to originate from the landfill.

“Despite the fact that sulfur dioxide is not a pollutant generated by the company, EnviroServ, together with our appointed experts, will continue to monitor pollutant levels in the various communities in our efforts to understand and mitigate any impacts from emissions known to be originating from the Shongweni Landfill that could be affecting these communities,” said EnviroServ Group CEO Dean Thompson.

The Department of Environmental Affairs, eThekweni Municipality and the Upper Highway Air Non-Profit Company and their experts have been given detailed information from the

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company's technical experts about this latest finding. The National Air Quality Officer will also be informed.

Meanwhile, at the landfill site, experts continue their work to mitigate the identified contributions to the odorous emissions linked to the site and several actions have already been completed.

"We have spent more than R15-million in the past 10 months to get to the bottom of the problem and I'd like to assure the community that our staff and the appointed experts are doing everything in their power, well beyond what we've been asked to do by the authorities, to fix the problem," said Thompson.

Some of the recent developments include revision of the design for a partial cap of the front face of the landfill originally submitted for approval to the DEA during May 2016. The revised cap will include gas collection systems and a combination liner system. "Critical items have been ordered, the contractor has been appointed and approval of the final design by the Department of Environmental Affairs is pending," said Thompson. The company is looking to commence with the capping in April.

To reduce venting of hydrogen sulfide (H₂S), the stone drainage layer has been sealed and will be tied into the gas collection system. "We are also in the process of installing a gas collection, extraction and treatment system to reduce the odour." Six vertical wells are planned for the capped waste body by August.

A gas flare system will flare gasses to reduce the hydrogen sulfide levels, and a pilot flare has been secured and has been delivered to site. Studies are continuing to determine the composition of the landfill gas so that an appropriate scrubber can also be installed to prevent the generation of other pollutants such as sulfur dioxide that may be a by-product of the flaring process.

Leachate and storm water will continue to be treated onsite, while accepted waste is treated to pH 9 to reduce the activity of the sulfur reducing bacteria which have become more active in the site and are the source of the hydrogen sulfide gas causing the odour. "We have appointed two independent experts to undertake a toxicological survey (sampling on site as well as dispersion modelling) and a technical assessment of landfill gas emissions. The technical assessment has been completed and their recommendations are being implemented. The toxicological study will be completed in mid-April," Thompson said.

"With much being done to alleviate our contribution to the odour, and our on-going engagement with the NPC, it came as a surprise to us to hear this week that they have taken legal action against EnviroServ arising from alleged breach of conduct at the Shongweni site." The company's legal team will defend the summons.



Thompson said the company realised there was still work to be done. “As a company with a proud 37-year history of compliance, we will go beyond legally required minimums as we implement all actions required to remediate the problem.”

For more information on the sulfur dioxide findings, PLEASE CLICK HERE.