

Activists decry reuse of contaminated soil

by UPI

CHICAGO -- Soil containing lead, arsenic and other chemicals shouldn't be taken from Chicago construction sites for reuse elsewhere, activists say.

Chicago environmental activists have asked that an ordinance being proposed to the City Council's Environment Committee on Monday not be approved without further research into the impact of the proposal, the Chicago Tribune said.

"For many, many years the city has not taken soil contamination seriously and it's our responsibility as communities of color that are severely impacted to call upon them and say it's too quick to make a decision," Little Village Environmental Justice Organization member Kim Wasserman said to the newspaper.

If approved, the ordinance would allow soil from Chicago construction sites to be reused at other construction locales as long as the soil doesn't violate city and state contaminant thresholds.

City Environmental Commissioner Suzanne Malec-McKenna assured the public those thresholds would prevent the use of dangerously contaminated soil.

"You're going to have certain levels of chemicals in the soil but not levels that are unsafe for human health and the environment," she told the Tribune.

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