

Fair weather makes no friends for Crow Lane dump

By Stephanie Chelf
Staff Writer

NEWBURYPORT — Neighbors of the Crow Lane landfill worry they won't be able to open their windows or head outside to enjoy the spring weather arriving this week because of odors continuing to seep from the landfill.

The city yesterday issued a violation notice, in response to a flood of complaints from residents, against New Ventures, the Everett company capping the landfill. The city alleges that the persistent odors violate state law and local Board of Health regulations.

If New Ventures does not complete the required action steps outlined in the violation notice, the company faces daily fines of up to \$1,300.

The nagging rotten eggs-like smell is unbearable for neighbors.

"Enough is enough," wrote Deb and Bill Woodbury of Charmanski Drive in an e-mail to the mayor and other city and state officials Wednesday. The Woodburys said on Wednesday night the odor was the strongest its ever been. It caused them to have running noses and teary eyes, the couple wrote.

"We have been patient and cooperative, but we have had enough," the e-mail said. "What will it be like this summer when it is a hot and humid night? Do we have to live inside our homes all summer because it stinks?"

An odor control plan was issued by the state to New Ventures in December, but the odor has persisted. Neighbors have repeatedly called the complaint hot-line set up by New Ventures.

New Ventures has been measuring the odor level. City officials say its highest level is considered a nuisance but not a threat to public health.

The odors typically spike for a few hours at night. But Wednesday night through Thursday morning, the peak level for odors was recorded for 12 hours straight, said Jon Higgins, the city's environmental specialist.

"We need an immediate solution to give (residents) relief," Clancy said.

New Ventures and the state Department of Environmental Protection are negotiating the next step of the odor control plan, installing a ventilation system to filter and burn the hydrogen sulfate that is causing the odor.

Clancy said residents can't wait and issued the violation order.

The violation notice sent yesterday requires the company to take three actions immediately or face state fines of up to \$1,000 and city fines of \$300 per day. The steps are:

- > Install technology recommended by Higgins to reduce odors. The company needs to submit a plan to the Board of Health by Monday with the plan to be implemented no later than Tuesday. New Ventures would be responsible for the costs.
- > Cease pumping and recirculating leachate, particles of liquified garbage.
- > Apply shell covering to the entire landfill immediately.

"Again, I am sorry that all of you have endured these issues," Clancy wrote in an e-mail to neighbors yesterday. "I hope that this latest action by the city, in combination with state regulations, will prevail."

Ron Klodenski of Wildwood Drive said Wednesday night's smell was the worst ever. He said he is encouraged to see the city respond.

"It shows that the city government is taking action to do something immediately," Klodenski said. "I don't know what the overall affect will be on New Ventures. We'll be looking forward to see what happens."