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**TLPJ AND BRIDGETON RESIDENTS SUE CITY OF ST. LOUIS
AND AIRPORT FOR ILLEGAL ASBESTOS REMOVAL**

**CITIZENS SEEK INJUNCTION, PENALTIES, AND CLEANUP FOR OVER 300
ASBESTOS-LADEN BUILDINGS DEMOLISHED USING EXPERIMENTAL ‘WET
METHOD’**

A national public interest law firm has joined forces with a local, grassroots environmental group to file a lawsuit today against the City of St. Louis and Lambert-St. Louis International Airport for endangering the public health by demolishing more than 300 buildings laden with deadly asbestos using the illegal and experimental “wet method” of asbestos removal. Trial Lawyers for Public Justice (TLPJ) filed the complaint in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri in St. Louis, charging the city and its airport authority with violating two federal environmental statutes, on behalf of Families for Asbestos Compliance, Testing and Safety (FACTS), a grassroots group comprised mainly of Bridgeton, Missouri residents who live near the demolished buildings and are concerned about the public health hazards of the asbestos fibers released by the demolitions. Asbestos is an extremely hazardous material that can cause cancer and other diseases that show up decades after the exposure occurs.

TLPJ notified the city and airport authority in January 2005 of its intent to sue on behalf of FACTS. Federal law imposes a 90-day statutory waiting period before a complaint may be filed.

“The City of St. Louis and its airport authority have shirked their duty both to inform local citizens about the scope of the asbestos contamination and to clean it up,” said TLPJ Environmental Enforcement Director Jim Hecker. “As a result, local citizens are seeking to protect their families’ health by holding the city and its airport authority accountable for unnecessarily and illegally exposing them to deadly asbestos fibers.”

Instead of removing all asbestos from buildings before they were demolished, as federal regulations under the Clean Air Act require, the airport authority left much of the

asbestos in place and merely wet it down with a hose during demolition. EPA's own scientists have stated that "there is no known safe level of asbestos exposure" and there is "substantial evidence that even with the wetting of [asbestos-containing materials] there will still be release of airborne asbestos fibers."

In a May 2, 2005 letter, the airport asked FACTS to delay its lawsuit until EPA conducted further studies and tests of the wet method, which may take until the end of 2005.

"This bureaucratic request that citizens wait even longer to get their day in court is insensitive and unreasonable, especially since the airport did not offer to take any steps to evaluate or clean up contamination from its five-year, illegal use of the wet method from 1999 to 2004," stated Hecker.

"The airport is turning the scientific method upside down, trying to justify further tests of this experimental method and treating us like human guinea pigs," said Carole Donnelly, a Bridgeton resident and member of FACTS. "The airport should have tested the method's safety before the buildings were demolished. Since it didn't do that, it now has the responsibility to assess the amount and extent of asbestos contamination in the community and clean up any contamination it finds."

The lawsuit seeks testing to determine the extent to which the releases may have contaminated the soil in the community with asbestos, and how much asbestos may be released into the air again when ground around the airport is disturbed.

"The city and the airport authority conducted an illegal and immoral human experiment on our community without our knowledge or consent," said FACTS Secretary and Bridgeton resident Susan Roberts. "We filed this citizen suit to protect our community's health and prevent further violations of federal environmental laws."

In its complaint, FACTS alleges that the city and the airport authority have violated the federal Clean Air Act more than 300 times by failing to use federally-required methods for removing asbestos before demolition. FACTS also charges that the released asbestos may have contaminated the soil and created an imminent and substantial endangerment to public health and the environment in violation of the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, which regulates releases of hazardous wastes. FACTS intends to seek civil penalties payable to the federal government for past Clean Air Act violations, an injunction preventing further violations, and an order requiring the city and the airport authority to evaluate and clean up contaminated soil. FACTS is not seeking damages for personal injuries to its members.

TLPJ's co-counsel in this case are Richard Miller of Monsees, Miller, Mayer, Presley & Amick in Kansas City, Missouri, Scott Frost of the Frost Law Firm in Dallas, Ben DuBose of Baron & Budd, P.C. in Dallas, and Bruce Morrison of the Great Rivers

Environmental Law Center in St. Louis. A copy of the complaint is posted on TLPJ's web site at www.tlpj.org.

Trial Lawyers for Public Justice is the only public interest law firm dedicated to using trial lawyers' skills and resources to advance the public good. Founded in 1982, TLPJ utilizes a network of more than 3,000 of the nation's outstanding trial lawyers to pursue precedent-setting and socially significant litigation. TLPJ has a wide-ranging litigation docket in the areas of consumer rights, worker safety, civil rights and liberties, toxic torts, environmental protection, and access to the courts. TLPJ is the principal project of The TLPJ Foundation, a not-for-profit membership organization headquartered in Washington, DC, with a West Coast office in Oakland, California. The TLPJ web site address is www.tlpj.org. TLPJ's Missouri State Coordinator is Richard Miller, tel. 816-361-5550.

Great Rivers Environmental Law Center is a nonprofit public interest environmental organization whose mission includes aiding and advising citizens and organizations in asserting and defending their interests in environmental values before administrative officials, and, as a last resort, before the courts. The Center's web site address is www.greatriverslaw.org.