



City of Detroit
Detroit City Council - District 4

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 16, 2025

TO: David Whitaker, Director, Legislative Policy Division

FROM: Latisha Johnson
District 4 Councilmember

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Latisha Johnson".

SUBJECT: Concerns about Aevitas Specialty Services Corporation

Greetings,

The Aevitas Specialty Services Corporation is a Waste Treatment Facility and Used Oil Recycler in District 4 that has been permitted by the state to operate since 2012. The corporation is privately held and is headquartered in Brantford, Ontario. The Aevitas facility is located in District 4, at 663 Lyncaste St., adjacent to other industrial and residential land uses. The facility maintains Hazardous Waste (HW) and Liquid Industrial By-product Transportation Licenses through the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). Even though Aevitas' license is managed by the state, I would like to look into legal pathways to restrict or withhold their ability to operate within the City of Detroit until their safety and air quality impacts are addressed.

Production at Aevitas generates a gas-like odor that has led to numerous complaints directed towards EGLE as well as calls to DTE about possible gas leaks in the area over the years. Our office has received 13 reports from concerned residents in the area adjacent to this facility about air quality and gas odors. Much of the eastside is often blanketed by this odor that residents often associate with the Stellantis plants or possible gas leaks. However, the EGLE pollution emergency alerting system has investigated many of these complaints and found that the source of the gas smell is the Aevitas facility. There have been 59 EGLE Air Complaint Investigations since 2020 and the Aevitas facility was most recently given a violation notice on May 20 of this

year¹. Despite this, EGLE, the EPA, and the City of Detroit have done little, to our knowledge, to hold Aevitas accountable for these noxious odors produced by their facility.

In the early morning on Monday, June 30, 2025, there was a massive, raging industrial fire at the Aevitas facility. The fire involved tanks of used oil, of which there are 100,000 gallons on site and put a 200,000-gallon tank of sulfuric acid at risk. The fire caused black smoke plumes visible for miles, spontaneous explosions, and injured a Detroit firefighter. There are residential neighborhoods directly to the east, west, and south of this facility. Burning of oil and related solvents can release Benzene, Toluene, Xylene, Particulate Matter, and Sulfuric Acid Mist into the air which have a range of short- and long-term health impacts.² A nearby air monitor on E. Jefferson and Terminal St recorded a spike in the Air Quality Index above 150, which is in the Unhealthy range.

I am concerned about the baseline air quality and noxious odor issues at Aevitas as well as the impacts of this fire on the health of surrounding and downwind communities. In the conditions of the EGLE (then DEQ) permit issued to Aevitas on April 3, 2012, they note that “operation of this equipment shall not result in the emission of an air contaminant which causes injurious effects to human health or safety, animal life, plant life of significant economic value, or property, or which causes unreasonable interference with the comfortable enjoyment of life and property (R336.1901).³ Aevitas has received multiple violation notices from EGLE for failure to comply with this statute and properly store and manage hazardous materials. During their most recent inspection by EGLE on May 13, 2025, 3 violations were noted in addition to previous EGLE violations from 2021 and 2024. This facility is having a chronic negative impact on the wellbeing of eastside communities and posed an acute risk when it caught fire on June 30, 2025.

Please draft a resolution calling for examining the legal options for rescinding any City permits, licenses, or zoning allowances that let them to operate until these concerns are sufficiently addressed. Additionally, please also investigate any policies, such as the zoning code, that regulate the reconstruction and remediation of the facility. I am specifically concerned that the estimated cost of the damage (\$3 million according to DFD) is significantly greater than the assessed value of the property (\$181, 300).

¹ <https://mienviro.michigan.gov/nsite/map/results/detail/8991752097458058241/compliance>

² <https://archive.epa.gov/epawaste/hazard/tsd/td/web/html/risk.html>

³ https://www.aevitasdetroit.com/_files/ugd/9977be_748b7a2cdc024eca8c00a35798d0b2e2.pdf

If you have any questions, please contact our Policy Analyst at estanley@ecndetroit.org.

Thank you!