

Introduced by Councilmember Latisha Johnson, this resolution passed unanimously in October 2025. It urges the city's law and building departments to pursue enforcement mechanisms to halt operations and penalize the Canadian-owned company until strict environmental and air quality concerns are addressed.

RESOLUTION REGARDING CONCERNS ABOUT AEVITAS SPECIALTY SERVICES CORPORATION

- WHEREAS;** The Aevitas Specialty Services Corporation (Aevitas) is a waste treatment and oil processing facility that has been permitted to operate in Detroit since 2012; and
- WHEREAS;** Since it began operating in Detroit, Aevitas has accumulated 18 citations from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and currently has 7 active violations with EGLE;¹ and
- WHEREAS;** In the early morning of June 30, 2025, a large fire broke out at the Detroit Aevitas facility exposing nearby residents to smoke and injuring a Detroit firefighter who responded to the fire;² and
- WHEREAS;** During the last inspection prior to the fire in May of 2025, EGLE cited 3 violations regarding the registration of vehicles that transport hazardous materials and the improper storage of liquid industrial by-products; and
- WHEREAS;** Since 2013, Aevitas has also been subjected to 64 air complaint investigations by the state, with 17 investigations occurring between 2024 and 2025 alone and where EGLE noted “persistent and objectionable odors of moderate to strong intensity attributable to Aevitas operation, impacting residential areas downwind of the facility”;³ and
- WHEREAS;** Fumes and particulate matter, like those that may be emanating from the Aevitas facility, have been shown to contribute to and exacerbate health conditions such as upper respiratory diseases, cardiovascular disease, and cancer;⁴ and
- WHEREAS;** Prolonged exposure to particulate matter is particularly harmful to those with respiratory conditions, the elderly, children, and to communities of color and those living in low-income neighborhoods due to systemic factors that make them more vulnerable to these health impacts;⁵ and
- WHEREAS;** The recent fire, in addition to the continued environmental violations, raise serious public safety concerns with regard to the continued operation of the Aevitas facility in the City of Detroit; **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**
- RESOLVED;** That the Detroit City Council strongly urges the Law Department and the Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department (BSEED) to explore and pursue any available enforcement mechanisms that the City may use to prevent further public safety incidents at the Aevitas facility in Detroit; **NOW BE IT FINALLY**
- RESOLVED;** That the Detroit City Clerk's Office provide a copy of this resolution to Corporation Counsel Conrad Mallett and David Bell, Director of BSEED, and to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes,

¹ https://www.egle.state.mi.us/wdspi/Cme/Violations.aspx?w=401830&ctl00_Body_ViolL=0* *0*2

² <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/detroit-city/2025/06/30/fire-east-detroit-industrial-site-under-control-officials-say/84417875007/>; <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2025/06/30/detroit-fire-department-industrial-fire-east-side-aevitas/84415260007/>

³ <https://mienviro.michigan.gov/nsite/map/results/detail/8991752097458058241/documents>

⁴ <https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/air-pollution>

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TO: The Honorable Detroit City Council

FROM: David Whitaker, Director Legislative Policy Division

DATE: October 6, 2025

RE: **Concerns about Aevitas Specialty Services Corporation**

The Legislative Policy Division has been requested by Council Member Latisha Johnson to provide a report that analyzes and examines legal options for rescinding any city permits, licensing, or zoning allowances for businesses in violation of City and State environmental regulations. This report addresses several questions posed by Council Member Johnson concerning community health and safety, legal options, and zoning regulations to ensure violators are regulated and held accountable for safety hazards.

History of Aevitas Plant and Violations

Aevitas Specialty Services Corporation is a waste treatment and oil processing facility that has been allowed to operate in Detroit since 2012. Since 2012 Aevitas has had an extensive history of violations issued by the State of Michigan. Beginning in 1991¹ a total of 30 reported violations were recorded by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) with 18 citations occurring at their current Detroit location. Currently 7 active violations remain open with EGLE.² Notably, a large fire broke out at the Aevitas facility on the morning of June 30, 2025, exposing nearby residents to smoke and injuring a Detroit firefighter who responded to the fire.³

¹ Many of the citations occurred at other facilities prior to the opening of the Detroit facility.

² https://www.egle.state.mi.us/wdsp/Cme/Violations.aspx?w=401830&ctl00_Body_ViolL=0* *0*2

³ <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/detroit-city/2025/06/30/fire-east-detroit-industrial-site-under-control-officials-say/84417875007/>; <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2025/06/30/detroit-fire-department-industrial-fire-east-side-aevitas/8441526007/>



Picture taken of Aevitas facility on March 30, 2025.

While Aevitas most recent inspection-based violation occurred July 2025, only documentation regarding the facilities May 13th, 2025, inspection is currently available. During the facility's May 13th inspection, the State cited 3 specific violations:⁴

1. Vehicles that are used to transport hazardous materials are required to have a copy of the notice of registration form and permit. During the inspection, a random vehicle's credentials were checked, and that vehicle did not have a copy of the most current Act 138 registrations. This issue was corrected while investigators were on site.
2. Liquid industrial by-products (LIB) are required to be protected from the weather. During the inspection, there were several totes and drums of LIB stored outdoors and exposed to the weather. The containers were located along the fence line to the west of the facility. Aevitas was instructed to process or remove the LIB containers from the outdoor area.
3. All tanks used to hold LIB are required to be closed or covered. During the inspection, there were several indoor containment areas and sumps that contained excessive LIB, some of which were completely full or overflowing. Aevitas was instructed to clean out the area and provide a work plan or schedule preventative maintenance to ensure the areas are cleaned out more frequently.

Since 2013 Aevitas has been subjected to 64 air complaint investigations by the state with 17 investigations occurring between 2024 and 2025 alone. The site has been issued 8 air quality violations with its most recent air complaint investigation occurring on May 20th, 2025, resulting in 1 new air quality

⁴ https://www.scribd.com/document/885972629/401830-CC-Aevitas-663-Lycaste-Detroit-Wayne-Co-MID985566629-7-2-2025#download&from_embed

violation. In the July 1st, 2025, violation notice,⁵ EGLE noted “persistent and objectionable odors of moderate to strong intensity (Odor Scale 3-4) attributable to Aevitas operations, impacting residential areas downwind of the facility” creating “unreasonable interference with the comfortable enjoyment of life and property”.

Trends in Air Quality

Understanding current air quality trends is critical for assessing long-term residential impacts. Data provided by Just Air, an independent non-profit organization, was analyzed by LPD staff.⁶ However, only data from January through March 2025 was available, as Just Air’s consistent monitoring and calculations extend only through March at this time. This provides a limited, three-month snapshot of local air quality conditions.

Site selection for data collection was especially important in identifying relevant trends. Just Air operates several air monitoring sites across the City. For this analysis, the closest site to the Aevitas plant was selected located at Detroit Enterprise Academy, approximately one mile away. It is important to note that from January 1 to February 4, 2025, no data was available from this monitor due to maintenance. As a result, the dataset covers a 56-day monitoring period between February 4 and March 31, 2025.

During this period, staff focused on PM 2.5 levels. Days were classified as “moderate” according to Just Air’s AQI and data guide when PM 2.5 concentrations exceeded 9 ug/m³, within the moderate range (9–35 ug/m³) at least one time during that day. Based on this approach:

- In February, the site experienced moderate PM 2.5 levels on 72% of days
- In March, the site experienced moderate PM 2.5 levels on 66% of days
- Cumulatively, between February and March, the area experienced moderate PM 2.5 levels on 69% of monitored days.

Health Impacts of Particulate Matter

PM exposure, both long and short term, is directly linked to a wide variety of chronic and acute health problems. Exposure to PM can cause or exacerbate health conditions⁷ such as but not limited to:

- Upper Respiratory Diseases
 - Asthma
 - COPD
 - Chronic bronchitis
 - Upper respiratory infections
 - Decreased lung function
 - Upper respiratory discomfort such as difficulty breathing and coughing
- Cardiovascular Disease
 - Nonfatal heart attacks
 - Irregular heartbeat
 - Hypertension
- Cancer

⁵ <https://mienviro.michigan.gov/nsite/map/results/detail/8991752097458058241/documents>

⁶ See attached spreadsheet containing data provided by Just Air.

⁷ <https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/air-pollution>

- Leukemia
- Lung cancer
- Colorectal and prostate cancer
- Breast cancer

While PM exposure can affect anyone, there are certain groups that face a higher risk of harm from prolonged exposure. These groups include individuals with respiratory conditions, the elderly, children, communities of color, and those living in low-income neighborhoods. Due to systemic factors that can contribute to long-term exposure,⁸ these populations tend to be more vulnerable to the health impacts of PM.

Regulations

The Aevitas facility currently operates as a by-right use in the M4 Intensive Industrial District, which allows for a range of heavy industrial activities. The City's zoning ordinance requires that a permit be obtained prior to a change in land use category or use type. BSEED has confirmed with our office that the last permit that exists in the City's records regarding the property is from 1967 for a one-story maintenance shop and warehouse and the permit has not been updated to a waste related use.⁹ However, EGLE has statutory jurisdiction over hazardous waste treatment facilities, and local governments are largely preempted from regulating hazardous waste storage and disposal.¹⁰ If Aevitas is permitted by the state as a hazardous waste treatment facility, it may not require further permitting from the City to operate. The information from EGLE is unclear regarding the permit status of Aevitas, as the MIEnviro Portal has multiple entries for 663 Lycaste street, one of which has the site codes for "scrap and waste materials" and "other nonhazardous waste treatment and disposal," but not hazardous waste treatment. Also, Aevitas does not appear on EGLE's list of current hazardous waste operating licenses, unlike Petro Chem Processing, which is located roughly one mile from the Aevitas facility.¹¹ The issue of whether Aevitas has the requisite permit for its current use should be referred to BSEED and/or the Law Department to investigate and, if necessary, take appropriate action.

While the zoning classification allows intensive industrial uses, Detroit retains several legal and regulatory pathways to restrict operations, enforce remediation, and condition continued use in response to environmental harm. By-right uses in M4 are still subject to zoning performance standards. Under Sec. 50-14-584 (Air Quality), "*The emission of dust, dirt, or smoke shall comply with all state and federal regulations.*" This establishes that any industrial facility operating in Detroit, including those in M4, must meet both state (EGLE) and federal (EPA) air quality requirements. In the case of Aevitas, emissions from the fire that drove local AQI levels above 150 may constitute a violation of this standard, particularly if pollutants exceeded thresholds under the Clean Air Act or Michigan's Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA).

Although Detroit cannot permanently eliminate a by-right use, the zoning code provides strong mechanisms to suspend operations until environmental hazards are resolved. The air quality standard in Sec. 50-14-584 gives the City grounds to initiate enforcement when emissions exceed lawful limits. In addition, Sections 50-4-48 and 50-4-61 authorize the City to withhold or revoke a Certificate of Occupancy if a structure or use does not conform to zoning requirements, preventing reopening until compliance is verified. Significant reconstruction following the fire also triggers site plan review under

⁸ <https://www.epa.gov/pm-pollution/health-and-environmental-effects-particulate-matter-pm>

⁹ 2019 Detroit City Code, Section 50-4-42.

¹⁰ MCL 324.11123.

¹¹ [Hazardous waste operating licenses](#)

Sec. 50-3-203 and Sec. 50-10-102, allowing the City to impose updated operational and environmental conditions as prerequisites for reauthorization of the use.

According to BSEED, the Aevitas facility must also be in compliance with the City's Property Maintenance Code, which requires that all buildings, premises, and structures within the City must be maintained to a minimum standard in order to ensure the public health, safety, and welfare of Detroit residents.¹² This includes proper storage and disposal of commercial solid waste as well as the recently passed fugitive dust ordinance.¹³ The Director of the Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department and the Public Health Director are authorized to enforce and ensure compliance with the provisions of the Property Maintenance Code. The City may seek civil fines and/or other civil remedies for violations of the code pursuant to Sections 8-15-11 and 8-15-12. Additionally, the City could impose penalties on Aevitas if it finds that Aevitas is creating an environmental nuisance under Chapter 16, Article II of the Code and, if applicable, the City could pursue remedies under tort law related to public nuisance.

¹² 2019 Detroit City Code, Article XV. - Property Maintenance Code.

¹³ *Id.*, Section 8-15-333.