

TO PROTECT STUDENTS, FEUER TARGETS SOUTH LA SCRAP METAL CO. NEXT TO JORDAN HIGH FOR ALLEGED NUISANCE



Los Angeles – With dangerous metal shards allegedly being ejected onto the

Jordan High School campus; massive scrap metal mountains perilously perched just feet from the school's border; and claims of noxious fumes, excessive noise, and a history of alleged multiple violations of environmental and building and safety laws, City Attorney Mike Feuer announced a lawsuit today against S & W Atlas Iron and Metal Co. Inc., (Atlas Metal) for maintaining a public nuisance. The lawsuit seeks abatement of the nuisance, a permanent injunction, and civil penalties.

"It's completely unacceptable that the Jordan High School community lives under a constant threat of being hit by sharp metal objects emanating from its dangerous next-door neighbor. School officials actually had to cordon off part of the athletic field out of fear that students or staff could be injured when they return this month," said Feuer. "With students back on campus very soon, it's imperative that they and school staff be safe – from the metal shards, the mountain of scrap, the noxious fumes, the noise—*all* that we allege here. Atlas Metal has had more than enough time during the Pandemic shutdown to prevent these threats from endangering the school. Now we're intervening."

The complaint, filed by Feuer's Environmental Justice Unit, alleges that Atlas Metal – and principals Gary Weisenberg and Matthew Weisenberg – have maintained a public nuisance adjacent to Jordan High School at 10019 South Alameda Street. The scrap metal recycler shares its southern and western borders with the school. Atlas Metal allegedly poses a danger to the health and safety of the school community, and the greater South Los Angeles community.

Atlas Metals has long been the source of metal shards launched onto the Jordan High School campus; one resulted in an evacuation after a 6-inch shard from a military device blasted 1,500 feet into the air before landing at the school. As a result of an increase of metal fragments allegedly being ejected from the facility onto the Jordan High grounds – occurring at least eight times in 2020 – the school was forced to fence-off large sections of its

campus for safety reasons in anticipation of reopening as the pandemic subsides, despite outdoor space being so crucial for social distancing.

Additionally, mountains of scrap metal – estimated at times to exceed 20 feet in height – tower above the border wall between Atlas Metal and Jordan High. Although the City requires a buffer of 50 feet between the facility and the school, these dangerous, haphazardly piled mountains are allegedly within 10 feet of the buffer wall and, the lawsuit claims, constitute a public nuisance. Since December, 2020, they have allegedly gotten larger. Feuer's complaint details almost two dozen additional alleged unauthorized uses of the buffer zone, including the storage of metal and hazard materials within it.

Further, on numerous occasions, the Jordan High community allegedly was exposed to noxious fumes spewed by Atlas Metal operations. These instances, constituting alleged violations of law, include fumes and smoke allegedly making a construction worker on the school campus sick in June, 2020, and dust allegedly raining onto the campus from the metal facility in July, 2020. Beginning in December, 2020, the area near the school's gymnasium has served as a COVID-19 test site. Testing staff reported that the smoke and fumes emitted from Atlas Metal made it hard for them to breathe. Out of concern for the health and well-being of people being tested, staff later installed industrial fans to blow the smoke and fumes from Atlas Metal away.

In addition to its long alleged history of unlawful operations and violations of California Hazardous Waste Control Laws, Atlas Metal has been subject to numerous enforcement actions, lawsuits and orders by various regulatory agencies, governing bodies and courts, including the Los Angeles County Fire Health and Hazardous Material Division, the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, the Los Angeles Fire Department, the Los Angeles Unified School District and the United States District Court.

Atlas Metal has been notified that its operations are unlawful and pose

myriad dangers, and yet during the past year when Jordan High School was closed due to the pandemic, Atlas Metal allegedly failed to abate them.

Jessica Brown, Supervisor of the City Attorney's Environmental Justice Unit, and Deputy City Attorneys Mark Soto and Braunson Virjee are managing this litigation.

[Complaints of alleged environmental abuses may be made online.](#)

[Read the complaint against Atlas Metal here.](#)