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Durbin seeks summit on Illinois Beach asbestos

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ZION — U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., is calling for a meeting with state and federal officials to bring him up to speed on the asbestos threat along the beaches of Lake Michigan.

Spokesman Christina Mulka was asked why the senator has suddenly become interested in a story that has been around since 1997, and she said recent stories about the asbestos threat “really stuck with him and he wants to look at it now. It has to start somewhere.”

“Millions of visitors enjoy the shores of Lake Michigan and specifically the beaches of Illinois Beach State Park every year,” Durbin said in a statement. “I want a clear understanding about any potential threats of asbestos there.”

Durbin said he sent letters seeking the summit to Douglas Scott, director of the Illinois Environmen-



Sen. Dick Durbin

tal Protection Agency; Sam Flood, director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources; Brad Bradley, project manager at U.S. EPA Region 5; Mark Johnson, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry; Tim King, director of intergovernmental affairs for the Chicago Park District; Paul Kakuris, president of the Illinois Dunesland Preservation Society; Lane Harrison, mayor of Zion; and U.S. Reps. Melissa Bean, D-Barrington, and Mark Kirk, R-Highland Park.

He said he wants to meet in the next week or so.

Paul Kakuris of the preservation society said that over a year ago when he filed a complaint to U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald he gave a copy of the complaint to a Durbin aide, but never heard back from the senator.

“I hand-delivered it to his office,” Kakuris added.

Regarding the meeting, Kakuris said some of the people on the list are also named in the complaints he has filed with federal and state officials.

“We really don’t know if there is going to be a meeting,” he said.



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Jeff Camplin, a health and safety engineer, holds some asbestos-bearing materials at Illinois Beach State Park.