

Commissioner Max Brewer Orders Fairbanks Dump Closed

JUNEAU -- Environmental Conservation Commissioner Max Brewer ordered city officials to close the Fairbanks dump at noon on Friday, September 29.

In a letter sent to Fairbanks officials, Brewer said that operation of the dump "has been grossly deficient" and itemized the reasons which led him to close the dump operation.

Calling the dump "a blight on the community" and a "disgrace on the reputation of the State," Brewer said investigations by his staff showed that refuse was scattered in an uncontrolled manner and "left uncovered for many days, often weeks at a time."

He said that garbage was often dumped into trenches which were dug to bury refuse and this practice led to pollution

of the ground water of the area.

Brewer said the Fairbanks dump was a "harborage for rats" and a "breeding ground for flies, mosquitoes and other obnoxious disease vectors" which endangered the health of the residents of the area.

"I feel that Fairbanks officials have had ample opportunity to look into the problem and come up with viable solutions. It seems to me that the time has come for action to be taken and sidestepping around the problem to cease," Brewer said.

Labeling his action as a move to solve one of the state's most serious environmental problems, Brewer said that city officials had several alternatives to explore with the closure of the dump.

At least one of these alternatives could be available on very short notice according to information received by the department.

If corrective action is not taken immediately, Brewer said that the onset of cold weather could result in "the present deplorable condition existing and further deteriorating until next summer."

Brewer said his department is ready to work with Fairbanks officials to solve the city's solid waste disposal problem.

"We have staff people with

expertise in this area and they will do all they can to help the city in any way possible," he said.