

# The Brewton Standard

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## Group seeks landfill probe

*By Kerry Whipple Bean  
publisher*

A grassroots environmental group is seeking U.S. attorney's investigation into the disposal of mercury-containing waste at the Timberlands landfill on Alabama 41 north of Brewton.

David Ludder, an attorney for Citizens for a Clean Southwest Alabama and Conservation Alabama, filed the letter Friday.

"This is a starting point," said Johnny Andrews, chairman of the CCSA. "We want to find out what the problem is."

Allied Waste officials could not be reached for comment Friday.

Earlier this year, Allied Waste transported about 23,000 tons of mercury cell chlor-alkali waste from Olin Corp. in McIntosh to the Timberlands landfill. At the time, Alabama Department of Environmental Management officials said the material was not considered hazardous because it was created before the material was classified as hazardous — therefore grandfathering it into state regulations.

Timberlands is not permitted to dispose of hazardous waste.

Last month, Ruth Harrell, chairwoman of the Coalition for a Healthier Escambia County, presented evidence to Escambia County commissioners about mercury in the groundwater from the Timberlands landfill. Harrell said data from ADEM and the Environmental Protection Agency shows that the concentration of mercury in the groundwater test wells has been equal to or above the safe drinking water limits for years.

"The citizens of Escambia County and all of southwest Alabama deserve the right to clean water, clean air and clean land," Jo Evers, public relations chairwoman for CCSA, said in a statement.

"But can we trust environmental regulators to properly regulate waste disposal in our state? We only hope this request will help change corporate and government behavior that threatens to damage the environment and the health of Alabama citizens and also encourage other citizens to join us in our cause."

Andrews said CCSA would like to know whether ADEM is not monitoring the landfill — or if the regulations are not strong enough.

"It could be either way," he said. "That's why we need to look at it. Our environment is too important."

CCSA was formed in large part to fight the proposed Conecuh Woods landfill. A Florida development company has plans to build an 1,600-acre landfill near Repton. Conecuh County commissioners have so far voted against the plans, but no formal proposal has been made yet.

CCSA has also begun working with residents in Escambia, Monroe and Baldwin counties, including looking at the Timberlands landfill.