

## NEWS

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# Beasley Allen attorney secures \$2.3 million jury verdict for plaintiffs harmed by landfill

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LEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA - (April 2, 2012) Beasley Allen attorney William E. Hopkins, Jr., along with co-counsel Gary Poliakoff, secured a \$2.3 million verdict from a South Carolina jury on behalf of Bishopville area residents harmed by a huge landfill in Lee County. The

jury found in favor of the plaintiffs against Lee County Landfill SC LLC, a division of waste management company Republic Services, holding the company responsible for "nuisance landfill odors that affect people's enjoyment of their property."

After two weeks of testimony and two days of deliberations, the jury awarded the affected residents \$532,500 in actual damages and \$1.8 million in punitive damages.

Hopkins and Poliakoff said the jury's verdict - which is rare, if not unprecedented in South Carolina - was both historic and courageous. This verdict, they say, will help other citizens in the state who suffer damages as a result of landfill companies. In the past, they say, landfill companies have looked at South Carolina as an easy target without tough restrictions on landfills.

"We were proud to represent these six Lee County residents who took it upon themselves to stand up to this landfill not only to seek justice, but also to improve the quality of life for all those who live in Lee County, South Carolina," Hopkins said.

The Lee County landfill takes more out-of-state waste than any other garbage dump in South Carolina, and has drawn fire in the past when residents complained of its overwhelming odor. Even passing motorists have remarked on the stench, according to local news reports.

Republic Services is a Fortune 500 company worth more than \$1 billion. Headquartered in Arizona, Republic has about 200 landfills nationally. Lee County Landfill SC LLC, an arm of Republic, has a net worth of \$15.78 million

Bill Hopkins joined Beasley Allen in 2010 in the firm's Consumer Fraud section. He has developed a successful class action practice, being appointed by several different courts as lead counsel or liaison counsel in many different class action cases. In fact, Bill had a long standing relationship with Beasley Allen prior to joining the firm, going back to 1995 when they joined forces in a class action suit against Life of Georgia Insurance Company.

Bill was named one of America's "Best Lawyers" by U.S. News & World Report for 2011 and 2012.

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