



## Beckman Lawson, LLP Announces Complaint Filed Against Marathon Ashland Petroleum, LLC

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FORT WAYNE, Ind.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Dec. 17, 2004--Beckman Lawson, LLP announced today, December 17, 2004, a Complaint seeking damages in excess of \$9,000,000 was filed in the United States District Court, Northern District of Indiana, Fort Wayne Division, against Marathon Ashland Petroleum, LLC. The Complaint is brought by local property owners, Bitler Investment Venture, LLC, and Melching Investment Venture, LLC, alleging that Marathon breached multiple lease agreements and committed environmental waste upon approximately 14 different properties and locations where Marathon had placed their gas stations. The Complaint further alleges that Marathon's conduct in breaching leases and committing waste on properties "was guided by anti-competitive motives."

The Complaint alleges "the Bitlers and Melchings were independent business persons whose real estate interests included commercial properties in small towns and cities in Michigan, Indiana and Ohio." The Complaint further alleges multiple counts of waste wherein Marathon allegedly left properties "contaminated" and "decimated the properties' commercial value."

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Beckman Lawson, LLP

Wendy W. Davis, 260-422-0800