

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 3
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103



In the Matter of: :
:
: U.S. EPA Docket No. EPCRA-03-2024-0098
:
Erie Hard Chrome, Inc. :
1570 East 12th Street : Proceeding under Section 325(c) of The
Erie, PA 16511 : Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-
: Know Act, 42 U.S.C. § 11045(c)

Respondent.

CONSENT AGREEMENT

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. This Consent Agreement is entered into by the Director of the Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3 (“Complainant”) and Erie Hard Chrome, Inc. (“Respondent”) (collectively the “Parties”), pursuant to Section 325(c) of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, 42 U.S.C. § 11045(c), and the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation, Termination or Suspension of Permits (“Consolidated Rules of Practice”), 40 C.F.R. Part 22. The Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act authorizes the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to assess penalties and undertake other actions required by this Consent Agreement. The Administrator has delegated this authority to the Regional Administrator who, in turn, has delegated the authority to enter into agreements concerning administrative penalties to the Complainant. This Consent Agreement and the attached Final Order (hereinafter jointly referred to as the “Consent Agreement and Final Order”) resolve Complainant’s civil penalty claims against Respondent under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (“EPCRA” or the “Act”) for the violations alleged herein.
2. In accordance with 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.13(b) and 22.18(b)(2) and (3) of the Consolidated Rules of Practice, Complainant hereby simultaneously commences and resolves this administrative proceeding.

JURISDICTION

3. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) has jurisdiction over the above-captioned matter, as described in Paragraph 1, above.

4. The Consolidated Rules of Practice govern this administrative adjudicatory proceeding pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.1(a)(8).

GENERAL PROVISIONS

5. For purposes of this proceeding only, Respondent admits the jurisdictional allegations set forth in this Consent Agreement and Final Order.
6. Except as provided in Paragraph 5, above, Respondent neither admits nor denies the specific factual allegations set forth in this Consent Agreement.
7. Respondent agrees not to contest the jurisdiction of EPA with respect to the execution of this Consent Agreement, the issuance of the attached Final Order, or the enforcement of this Consent Agreement and Final Order.
8. For purposes of this proceeding only, Respondent hereby expressly waives its right to contest the allegations set forth in this Consent Agreement and Final Order and waives its right to appeal the accompanying Final Order.
9. Respondent consents to the assessment of the civil penalty stated herein, to the issuance of any specified compliance order herein, and to any conditions specified herein.
10. Respondent shall bear its own costs and attorney's fees in connection with this proceeding.

FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

11. In accordance with 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.13(b) and 22.18(b)(2) and (3) of the Consolidated Rules of Practice, Complainant alleges and adopts the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law set forth immediately below.
12. Respondent is an industrial plating company that specializes in hard chrome plating, electroless nickel plating and the polishing of molds, tools, and dies. The Facility services and repairs hydraulic cylinders, rollers and shafts for milling and heavy construction equipment industries.
13. Respondent is, and at all times relevant to the violations alleged herein, was, a corporation incorporated in the state of Pennsylvania.
14. Respondent is a "person" as that term is defined in Section 329(7) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11049(7) and is subject to the assessment of civil penalties for the violations alleged herein.

15. Respondent is and, at all times relevant to the violations alleged herein, was the owner and operator of a “facility”, as that term is defined in Section 329(4) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11049(4), located at 1570 East 12th St., Erie, PA (hereinafter “the Facility”).
16. On May 24, 2023, EPA sent Respondent a notice of inspection (“NOI”) notifying the company of a pending EPA inspection to determine the Facility’s compliance with Section 313 of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11023, and the regulations codified at 40 C.F.R. Part 372.
17. On June 14, 2023, EPA conducted its inspection at the Facility.
18. On February 16, 2024, EPA issued a Notice of Potential Violation and Opportunity to Confer (“NOPVOC”) letter to Respondent.
19. On February 27, 2024, Respondent sent a letter via email in response to the alleged violations in the NOPVOC.

COUNT I

Failure to Complete a Toxic Chemical Release Form for Lead in 2019, 2020, and 2021

20. The information and allegations in the preceding paragraphs of this Consent Agreement are incorporated herein by reference.
21. Section 313(a) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11023(a) requires that “[t]he owner or operator of a facility subject to the requirements of this section shall complete a toxic chemical release form as published under subsection (g) for each toxic chemical listed under subsection (c) that was manufactured, processed, or otherwise used in quantities exceeding the toxic chemical threshold quantity established by subsection (f) during the preceding calendar year at such facility.” *See also* 40 C.F.R. § 372.30.
22. Pursuant to Section 313(b)(1)(A) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11023(b)(1)(A), the requirements of Section 313 “apply to owners and operators of facilities that have 10 or more full-time employees and that are in Standard Industrial Classification Codes 20 through 39 (as in effect on July 1, 1985) and that manufactured, processed, or otherwise used a toxic chemical listed under subsection (c) in excess of the quantity of that toxic chemical established under subsection (f) during the calendar year for which a release form is required under this section.” *See also* 40 C.F.R. § 372.22.
23. Each toxic chemical release form (“TRI Form”) must be submitted on or before July 1 of the next year. 40 C.F.R. § 372.30(d).

24. 40 C.F.R. § 372.65 lists the chemicals chemical categories to which the regulations promulgated pursuant to EPCRA, apply.
25. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 372.65(1), Table 1, lead is a regulated chemical.
26. Pursuant to Section 313(f)(1)(B)(iii) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11023(f)(1)(B)(iii), the current reporting threshold for toxic chemicals manufactured or processed at a facility is 25,000 pounds (lbs.), unless the Administrator establishes a revised threshold pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 11023(f)(2) or an exemption under 40 C.F.R. § 372.38 applies.
27. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 372.28(a)(1), Table 1, the reporting threshold for lead is 100 lbs.
28. During calendar years 2019, 2020 and 2021, Respondent had between 20 and 21 full time employees.
29. During calendar years 2019, 2020 and 2021, Respondent had a primary SIC code of 3295.
30. During calendar years 2019, 2020 and 2021, Respondent processed approximately 954 lbs. of lead each year.
31. On October 2, 2023, Respondent submitted a TRI Form for the lead for calendar years 2019.
32. On October 3, 2023, Respondent submitted TRI Forms for lead for calendar years 2020 and 2021.
33. During calendar years 2019, 2020 and 2021, Respondent failed to submit TRI Forms for lead by the July 1, 2020, 2021, and 2022 reporting deadlines, respectively.
34. For the calendar years 2019, 2020, and 2021, Respondent violated 40 C.F.R. § 372.30 by failing timely report the amounts of the toxic chemical lead released from the Facility into the environment and transferred offsite by July 1, of the year following the release.
35. In failing to comply with 40 C.F.R. § 372.30, Respondent is in violation of Section 313 of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11023, and is subject to the assessment of penalties under Section 325(c) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11045(c).

CIVIL PENALTY

36. In settlement of EPA's claims for civil penalties for the violations alleged in this Consent Agreement, Respondent consents to the assessment of a civil penalty in the amount of

THIRTY-ONE THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED AND FIFTY-THREE dollars (\$31,653), which Respondent shall be liable to pay in accordance with the terms set forth below.

37. The civil penalty is based upon EPA's consideration of a number of factors. These factors were applied to the particular facts and circumstances of this case with specific reference to EPA's *Enforcement Response Policy for Section 313 of the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (1987) and Section 6607 of the Pollution Prevention Act (1990)*, Feb. 24, 2017 (amended), the appropriate *Adjustment of Civil Monetary Penalties for Inflation*, pursuant to 40 C.F.R. Part 19, and the applicable EPA memoranda addressing EPA's civil penalty policies to account for inflation.
38. Respondent agrees to pay a civil penalty in the amount of **\$31,653** ("Assessed Penalty") within thirty (30) days of the Effective Date of this Consent Agreement and Final Order.
39. Respondent shall pay the Assessed Penalty and any interest, fees, and other charges due using any method, or combination of appropriate methods, as provided on EPA website: <https://www.epa.gov/financial/makepayment>. For additional instructions see: <https://www.epa.gov/financial/additional-instructions-making-payments-epa>.
40. When making a payment, Respondent shall:
 - a. Identify every payment with Respondent's name and the docket number of this Consent Agreement, **[EPCRA-03-2024-0098]**,
 - b. Concurrently with any payment or within 24 hours of any payment, Respondent shall serve Proof of Payment simultaneously **by email** to the following person(s):

Hannah Leone
Assistant Regional Counsel
Leone.hannah@epa.gov,

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Cincinnati Finance Center
CINWD_AcctsReceivable@epa.gov,

and

U.S. EPA Region 3 Regional Hearing Clerk
R3_Hearing_Clerk@epa.gov.

"Proof of Payment" means, as applicable, a copy of the check, confirmation of credit card or debit card payment, or confirmation of wire or automated clearinghouse transfer, and any other information required to demonstrate that payment has been

made according to EPA requirements, in the amount due, and identified with the appropriate docket number and Respondent's name.

41. Interest, Charges, and Penalties on Late Payments. Pursuant to 31 U.S.C. § 3717, 31 C.F.R. § 901.9, and 40 C.F.R. § 13.11, if Respondent fails to timely pay the full amount of the Assessed Penalty per this Consent Agreement, EPA is authorized to recover, in addition to the amount of the unpaid Assessed Penalty, the following amounts.
 - a. Interest. Interest begins to accrue from the Effective Date of this Consent Agreement. If the Assessed Penalty is paid in full within thirty (30) days, interest accrued is waived. If the Assessed Penalty is not paid in full within thirty (30) days, interest will continue to accrue until any unpaid portion of the Assessed Penalty as well as any interest, penalties, and other charges are paid in full. To protect the interests of the United States, the rate of interest is set at the IRS standard underpayment rate, any lower rate would fail to provide Respondent adequate incentive for timely payment.
 - b. Handling Charges. Respondent will be assessed monthly a charge to cover the EPA's costs of processing and handling overdue debts. If Respondent fails to pay the Assessed Penalty in accordance with this Consent Agreement, the EPA will assess a charge to cover the costs of handling any unpaid amounts for the first thirty (30) day period after the Effective Date. Additional handling charges will be assessed every thirty (30) days, or any portion thereof, until the unpaid portion of the Assessed Penalty as well as any accrued

which includes, but is not limited to, referral to the Internal Revenue Service for offset against income tax refunds, per 40 C.F.R. Part 13, Subparts C and H.

- c. Suspend or revoke Respondent's licenses or other privileges, or suspend or disqualify Respondent from doing business with EPA or engaging in programs EPA sponsors or funds, per 40 C.F.R. § 13.17.
 - d. Refer this matter to the United States Department of Justice for litigation and collection, per 40 C.F.R. § 13.33.
43. Allocation of Payments. Pursuant to 31 C.F.R. § 901.9(f) and 40 C.F.R. § 13.11(d), a partial payment of debt will be applied first to outstanding handling charges, second to late penalty charges, third to accrued interest, and last to the principal that is the outstanding Assessed Penalty amount.
44. Tax Treatment of Penalties. Penalties, interest, and other charges paid pursuant to this Consent Agreement shall not be deductible for purposes of federal taxes.
45. Payment of the civil penalty is due and payable immediately upon receipt by Respondent of a true and correct copy of the fully executed and filed Consent Agreement and Final Order. Receipt by Respondent or Respondent's legal counsel of such copy of the fully executed Consent Agreement and Final Order, with a date stamp indicating the date on which the Consent Agreement and Final Order was filed with the Regional Hearing Clerk, shall constitute receipt of written initial notice that a debt is owed EPA by Respondent in accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 13.9(a).
46. Failure by the Respondent to pay the EPCRA civil penalty assessed by the Final Order in accordance with the terms of this Consent Agreement and Final Order may subject Respondent to a civil action to collect the assessed penalties, plus interest, pursuant to Section 325 of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11045. In any such collection action, the validity, amount and appropriateness of the penalty shall not be subject to review.]
47. The parties consent to service of the Final Order by e-mail at the following valid email addresses: leone.hannah@epa.gov (for Complainant), and rgandley@mijb.com (for Respondent).

GENERAL SETTLEMENT CONDITIONS

48. By signing this Consent Agreement, Respondent acknowledges that this Consent Agreement and Final Order will be available to the public and represents that, to the best of Respondent's knowledge and belief, this Consent Agreement and Final Order does not contain any confidential business information or personally identifiable information from Respondent.

49. Respondent certifies that any information or representation it has supplied or made to EPA concerning this matter was, at the time of submission true, accurate, and complete and that there has been no material change regarding the truthfulness, accuracy or completeness of such information or representation. EPA shall have the right to institute further actions to recover appropriate relief if EPA obtains evidence that any information provided and/or representations made by Respondent to EPA regarding matters relevant to this Consent Agreement and Final Order, including information about respondent's ability to pay a penalty, are false or, in any material respect, inaccurate. This right shall be in addition to all other rights and causes of action that EPA may have, civil or criminal, under law or equity in such event. Respondent and its officers, directors and agents are aware that the submission of false or misleading information to the United States government may subject a person to separate civil and/or criminal liability.
50. Respondent certifies to EPA, upon personal investigation and to the best of its knowledge and belief, that it currently is in compliance with regard to the violations alleged in this Consent Agreement.

OTHER APPLICABLE LAWS

51. Nothing in this Consent Agreement and Final Order shall relieve Respondent of its obligation to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, nor shall it restrict EPA's authority to seek compliance with any applicable laws or regulations, nor shall it be construed to be a ruling on the validity of any federal, state or local permit. This Consent Agreement and Final Order does not constitute a waiver, suspension or modification of the requirements of EPCRA or any regulations promulgated thereunder.

RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

52. This Consent Agreement and Final Order resolves only EPA's claims for civil penalties for the specific violation[s] alleged against Respondent in this Consent Agreement and Final Order. EPA reserves the right to commence action against any person, including Respondent, in response to any condition which EPA determines may present an imminent and substantial endangerment to the public health, public welfare, or the environment. This settlement is subject to all limitations on the scope of resolution and to the reservation of rights set forth in Section 22.18(c) of the Consolidated Rules of Practice, 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(c). EPA reserves any rights and remedies available to it under EPCRA, the regulations promulgated thereunder and any other federal law or regulation to enforce the terms of this Consent Agreement and Final Order after its effective date.

EXECUTION /PARTIES BOUND

53. This Consent Agreement and Final Order shall apply to and be binding upon EPA, the Respondent and the officers, directors, employees, contractors, successors, agents and assigns of Respondent. By his or her signature below, the person who signs this Consent Agreement on behalf of Respondent is acknowledging that he or she is fully authorized by the Respondent to execute this Consent Agreement and to legally bind Respondent to the terms and conditions of this Consent Agreement and Final Order.

EFFECTIVE DATE

54. The effective date of this Consent Agreement and Final Order (“Effective Date”) is the date on which the Final Order, signed by the Regional Administrator of EPA, Region 3, or his/her designee, the Regional Judicial Officer, is filed along with the Consent Agreement by the Regional Hearing Clerk pursuant to the Consolidated Rules of Practice.

ENTIRE AGREEMENT

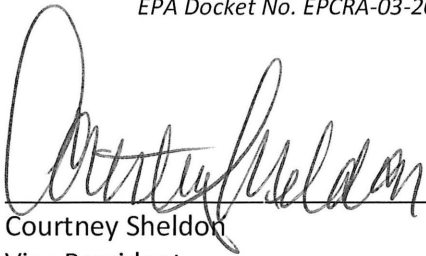
55. This Consent Agreement and Final Order constitutes the entire agreement and understanding between the Parties regarding settlement of all claims for civil penalties pertaining to the specific violations alleged herein and there are no representations, warranties, covenants, terms, or conditions agreed upon between the Parties other than those expressed in this Consent Agreement and Final Order.

In the Matter of: Erie Hard Chrome, Inc.

EPA Docket No. EPCRA-03-2024-0098

For Respondent: Erie Hard Chrome, Inc.

Date: 4/5/2024

By: 
Courtney Sheldon
Vice President

For the Complainant:

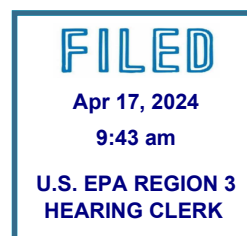
After reviewing the Consent Agreement and other pertinent matters, I, the undersigned Director of the Enforcement & Compliance Assurance Division of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3, agree to the terms and conditions of this Consent Agreement and recommend that the Regional Administrator, or his/her designee, the Regional Judicial Officer, issue the attached Final Order.

By: _____
[Digital Signature and Date]
Karen Melvin, Director
Enforcement & Compliance Assurance Division
U.S. EPA – Region 3
Complainant

Attorney for Complainant:

By: _____
[Digital Signature and Date]
Hannah Leone
Assistant Regional Counsel
U.S. EPA – Region 3

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 3
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103



In the Matter of: :
: :
: U.S. EPA Docket No. EPCRA-03-2024-0098
Erie Hard Chrome, Inc. :
1570 East 12th Street : Proceeding under Section 325(c) of The
Erie, PA 16511 : Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-
: Know Act, 42 U.S.C. § 11045(c)
Respondent.

FINAL ORDER

Complainant, the Director of the Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3, and Respondent, Erie Hard Chrome, Inc., have executed a document entitled "Consent Agreement," which I hereby ratify as a Consent Agreement in accordance with the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits ("Consolidated Rules of Practice"), 40 C.F.R. Part 22, Sections 22.13(b) and 22.18(b)(2) and (3). The terms of the foregoing Consent Agreement are accepted by the undersigned and incorporated into this Final Order as if fully set forth at length herein.

Based upon the representations of the parties in the attached Consent Agreement, the penalty agreed to therein is based upon consideration of, *inter alia*, EPA's *Enforcement Response Policy for Section 313 of the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (1987) and Section 6607 of the Pollution Prevention Act (1990)*, Feb. 24, 2017 (amended).

NOW, THEREFORE, PURSUANT TO Section 325(c) of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, 42 U.S.C. § 11045(c), and Section 22.18(b)(3) of the Consolidated Rules of Practice, **IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** that Respondent pay a civil penalty in the amount of **THIRTY-ONE THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED AND FIFTY-THREE DOLLARS (\$31,653)**, in accordance with the payment provisions set forth in the Consent Agreement and in 40 C.F.R. § 22.31(c), and comply with the terms and conditions of the Consent Agreement.

This Final Order constitutes the final Agency action in this proceeding. This Final Order shall not in any case affect the right of the Agency or the United States to pursue appropriate injunctive or other equitable relief, or criminal sanctions for any violations of the law. This Final Order resolves only those causes of action alleged in the Consent Agreement and does not waive, extinguish or otherwise affect Respondent's obligation to comply with all applicable provisions of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act and the regulations

promulgated thereunder.

The effective date of the attached Consent Agreement and this Final Order is the date on which this Final Order is filed with the Regional Hearing Clerk.

By: _____
Joseph J. Lisa
Regional Judicial and Presiding Officer
U.S. EPA Region 3

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 3
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103

In the Matter of: :
:
: U.S. EPA Docket No. EPCRA-03-2024-0098
Erie Hard Chrome, Inc. :
1570 East 12th Street : Proceeding under Section 325(c) of The
Erie, PA 16511 : Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-
: Know Act, 42 U.S.C. § 11045(c)
Respondent.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that the foregoing **Consent Agreement and Final Order** was filed with the EPA Region 3 Regional Hearing Clerk on the date that has been electronically stamped on the **Consent Agreement and Final Order**. I further certify that on the date set forth below, I caused to be served a true and correct copy of the foregoing to each of the following persons, in the manner specified below, at the following addresses:

Copies served via email to:

Courtney Sheldon
Erie Hard Chrome, Inc.
csheldon@eriehardchrome.com
1570 East 12th St.
Erie, PA 16511

Robert E. Gandley, Esq.
MacDonald, Illig, Jones & Britton LLP
rgandley@mijb.com
100 State Street, Suite 700
Erie, PA 16507

Hannah Leone
Assistant Regional Counsel
U.S. EPA, Region 3
Leone.hannah@epa.gov

Scott Rice
Environmental Protection Specialist
U.S. EPA, Region 3
Rice.Scott@epa.gov

[Digital Signature and Date]
Regional Hearing Clerk
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3